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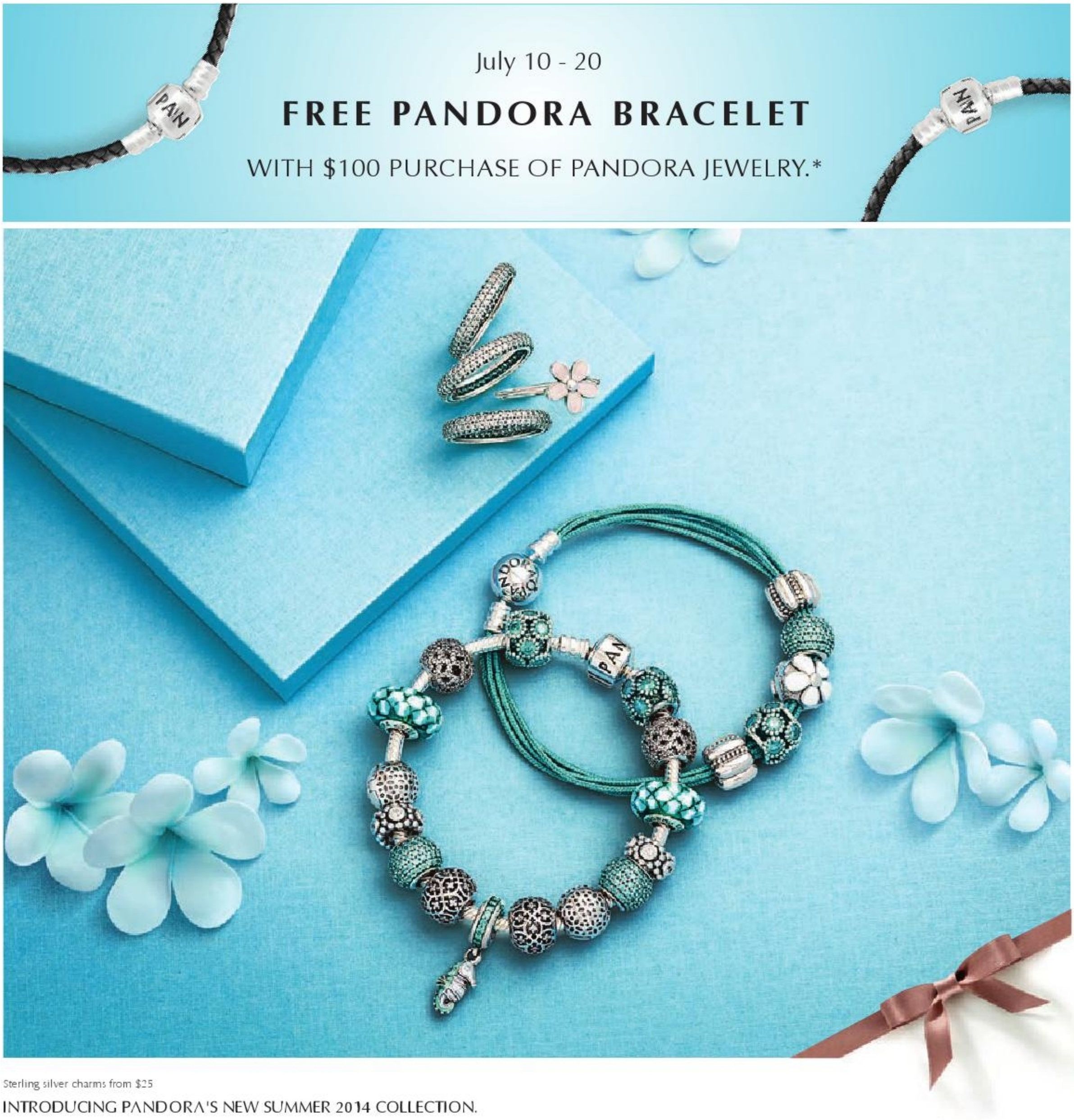

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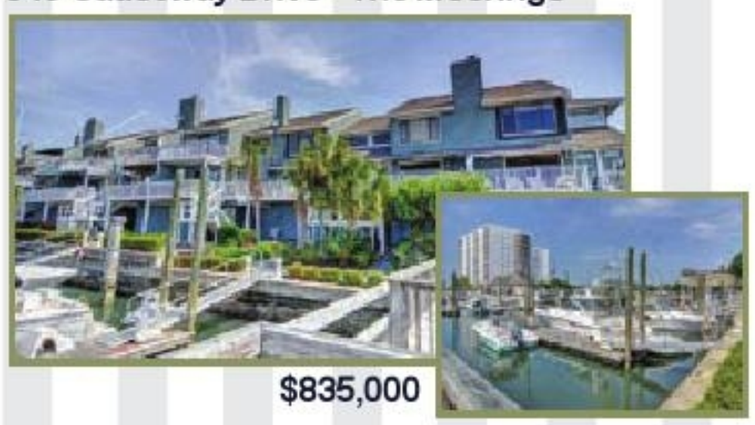

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July 2014

Cover illustration by Clair Hartmann

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Features

39 Pet Psychic
Poetry by Jonathan K. Rice

40 Pup and Circumstance
By Nan Graham
Thanks to Monty's Home, an innovative program has become a real game-changer for man and dog

44 Life Made Whole
By Jason Frye
Dogs complete us. Six stories of rescued love are proof

50 My Walk with Hilda
By Gwenyfar Rohler
Yes, my dog can spell. She sees s-o-f-t-i-e written all over me

52 The Art of Dog
An intimate glimpse into the mind – and studio – of local painter Clair Hartmann

56 Story of a House
By Ashley Wahl
Sparky is top dog at Camellia Cottage. Ask Henry MacMillan

63 Pure Garden Enchantment
By Barbara J. Sullivan
Hank and Debbie Phillips' Landfall garden is a living storybook

69 July Almanac
By Noah Salt
Dragonflies and the "Dog Days" of summer

Departments

11 Simple Life
By Jim Dodson

14 SaltWorks
The best of Wilmington

16 Front Street Spy
By Ashley Wahl

19 Screenlife
By Gwenyfar Rohler

21 Omnivorous Reader
By Stephen E. Smith

25 My Life in 1,000 Words
By JoAnne Silvia

27 N.C. Writer's Notebook
By Sandra Redding

28 Lunch With A Friend
By Dana Sachs

31 Our Man on the Town
By Jason Frye

33 Notes From the Porch
By Bill Thompson

35 Birdwatch
By Susan Campbell

36 Excursions
By Virginia Holman

70 Calendar
July happenings

74 Port City People
Out and about

79 Accidental Astrologer
By Astrid Stellanova

80 Papadaddy's Mindfield
By Clyde Edgerton

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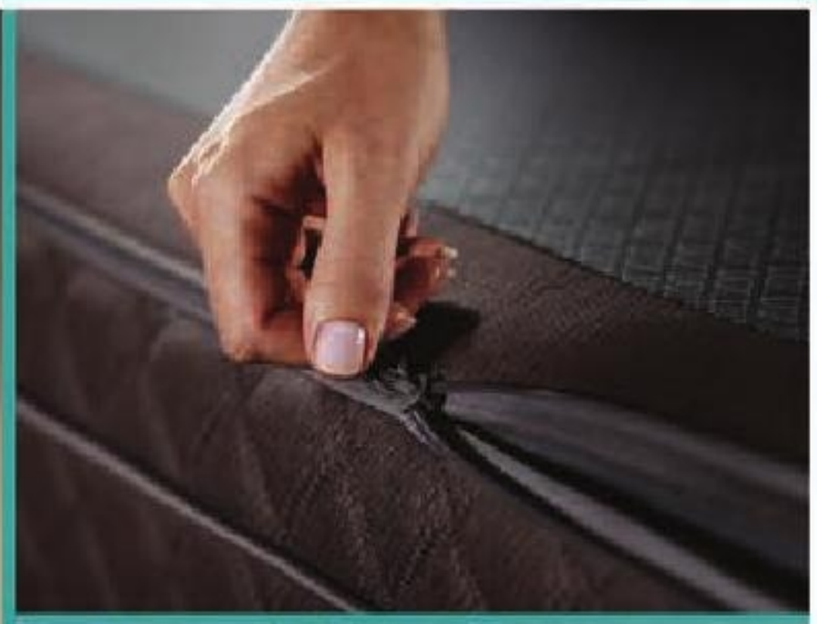

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Summer Evenings

By Jim Dodson

The best part of any summer day is evening. As the light expires and the heat of day yields to the cool of night, a kind of magic realism takes possession of the world. New life stirs by degrees. Lovers inch closer on the blanket. Children light sparklers or do cartwheels on the lawn. The old ones sit on porches quietly talking, fondly recalling things, gently rocking. The village orchestra warms up on the college lawn. They're playing Sousa and Copland tonight.

As apricot light gives way to twilight blue, it is as if the world is exhaling from a tough day in traffic or the fatigue of family vacation. Work in the garden is over. The porch swing creaks. Venus rides low in the east, the first stars visible. And oh, look — the summer's first fireflies are out, too. The sprinkler bursts on and hisses. The cat pads home. Neighborhood sounds seem close enough to touch. Somewhere a screen door slaps shut, a woman laughs, a guitar is being played, a bath is being run, dinner served, a candle lit, wine poured, prayers said.

On such an evening, one can be forgiven the folly of thinking you just may live forever, or at least long enough to see the Blue Mosque and the Ganges at sunset.

A fine summer evening makes one briefly think all things are possible, that there is still time enough left to actually do it, that there is really no such thing as old because you can almost reach out and touch your vanished childhood. Just yesterday you were sitting in the highest seat on the ferris wheel when it stopped to let others on, granting you both a perfect view of everything. You longed to take her hand because her hair smelled like Prell and tangerines.

Hot summer nights, mid-July
When you and I were forever wild,
The crazy days, the city lights,
The way you'd play with me like a child.

The opening lines of Lana Del Rey's soulful "Young and Beautiful," the theme song from Baz Luhrmann's recent film adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, express this Pyrrhic hunger for life and experience quite nicely even though the movie itself was something of an untidy mess, not unlike the author's own life. *Will you still love me,* she laments, *when I'm no longer young and beautiful?*

Poets and children have always found summer evenings irresistible fare. In his mesmerizing novella *Enchanted Night*, Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Steven Millhauser creates an entire New England town bewitched by the supernatural power of high summer darkness. Under the influence of a full moon, children in a small Connecticut town are drawn from their beds while their abandoned stuffed animals come to life in attics across town. A gang of teenage girls roams the streets breaking into homes to steal refrigerator magnets and toothbrushes, leaving giddy notes that declare, "We are your daughters!" A store mannequin comes to life in search of love; an insomniac novelist finally leaves his mother's house to engage in a debate about existence; and an introverted girl bathes in the moonlit surf. For anyone who has been bored by summer's sweltering sameness, Millhauser's evocation of a world that comes alive at dusk with secret desires and unexplored passions is nothing shy of an invitation to surrender to bittersweet imagination. Centuries before, Shakespeare worked this same turf to great effect when he made summer night dreams a fine mad romp of confused love that vanished with the morning light.

When I was young my older brother, Dickie, and I seemed to live out of doors all summer. Our feet were always dirty. We ran wild through the neighborhood, or I did anyway, damming creeks and making forts where I sat on the bank and and read *Classics Illustrated* and dreamed of living in England. I rode my bike all over God's green acre pretending I was there already, in fact, pedaling like an orphanage runaway down a hedgerow lane, eager to escape the gravity of my sleepy Southern life any way possible.

Henry James may truly have believed that the two most beautiful words in the English language were "summer afternoon," but they felt bone-lonely and unbearably endless to me in my solitary outdoor boyhood, the reason I later took to golf and camping and mowing lawns. Our father was a newspaper man who moved us to four different places in the old Confederacy during the first seven years of my life, which left me with few if any play-

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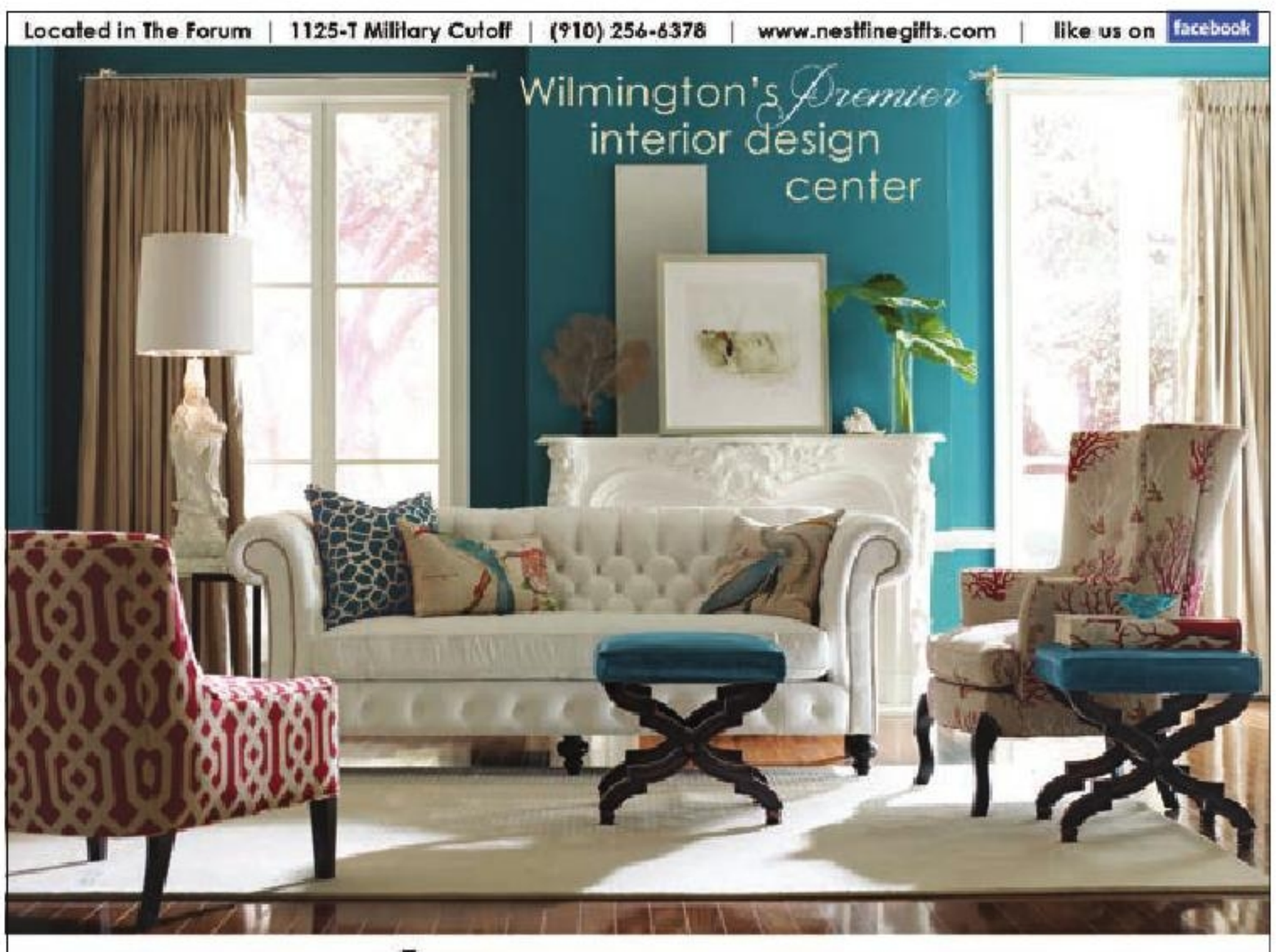
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mates — I remember exactly none before about age 7 — but left me free to roam at will, read books and comics, explore old sheds and conduct the Punic Wars with my painted Greek and Roman soldiers in the cool dirt beneath whatever fan-cooled house we were living in. Our mother was a former beauty queen who'd lost a second baby not long ago; she sometimes napped in the long afternoons while our maid, Jesse May Richardson, ironed my father's shirts in the kitchen, humming to the gospel tunes she dialed up on the small transistor radio in the kitchen window, the tap water in her Coca-Cola bottle sloshing back and forth as she sprinkled the fabric and sang about flying away to Jesus.

After Vacation Bible School was over, if I pestered hard enough, Miss Jesse May sometimes let me tag along with her to do the weekly shopping at the Piggly Wiggly, which was the only place in town fully air conditioned — *Do step inside where it's . . . coooool*, read the sign in the front window showing a friendly penguin with a jaunty cap. Miss Jesse May didn't believe in dawdling and had complete authority over my personal affairs. "Don't you dare let me catch them sandals off your feet," she instructed firmly before briskly setting off for the vegetable aisle. "And don't let me learn you've made a whisker of trouble in this store."

I rarely made trouble, per se, sometimes just temporary "king seats" out of the flour sacks in the baking aisle. But trust me when I tell you I never failed to shuck those sorry Vacation Bible School sandals faster than you could say "Martha White Self-Rising Flour," just to slide my bare hot and dirty feet over those cool air-conditioned floor tiles for a blissfully rebellious moment or two before Miss Jesse May came wheeling around the aisle looking as unimpressed as a concrete Jesus.

It was only summer evenings that made this life half-tolerable, or so I thought at the time. The whole world seemed to change for the better as the shadows on the lawn lengthened and the hot light of South Carolina kindly expired its term. My father came home with a loosened necktie and made highballs for himself and my mother. They sat and talked beneath the slowly turning ceiling fan on the wraparound porch. I remember the powerful smell of honeysuckle out there, caladiums big as dinner plates, maybe even gardenia in bloom. More than once after supper was cleared away, before she went home to a separate life I knew nothing about, Miss Jesse May dialed up a jackleg rockabilly station from Sumpter and taught me to "feet dance" by placing my bare feet on top of her fleshy ones and shimmying across the floor. My mother sometimes joined in, almost her old self again. My father just grinned like a fool, standing in the kitchen doorway. He had wooden feet, my mother joked. "All two of them."

Miss Jesse May passed away just weeks before we moved home to Greensboro, where my father's people went back for generations. As I recall, we were the only white folks at her funeral. Because of her, my mother became a very fine Southern cook and crack gardener, and I learned to dance and like fancy gospel music.

That next summer we took our first family vacation to the beach, putting up at the rustic Seaside Club, where we used to go when my father worked at the paper in Wilmington. Summer evenings took on a whole new cast after that. The adults gathered on the porches in summer evenings, whiskey sours and cheap wine in hand, telling jokes we weren't permitted to hear, raucous laughter from the upper porch, women in sundresses with sunburned shoulders.

A new tribe of kids took me into their ranks. They came from everywhere — Ohio, Pennsylvania, Chapel Hill. I saw them — a few, anyway — for six straight summers. We roamed the beach at dusk, hooting and pretending to be big trouble; ogled gutted sand sharks hung up like Mussolini and his mistress on the pier; and snuck up sandy stairways into the vast dim ballroom at Lumina Pavillion to watch older teenagers dance and make out. Somewhat later, I saw my first naked woman other than my mother through a convenient knot-hole my buddy Brad found in the pine wall of the women's dressing room beneath the Seaside Club. That same week I gigged my first flounder in the evening flats off Bald Head Island, in those days just a sea-washed island with its lonely unworking lighthouse, reached only by skiff with a wheezing outboard. At age 13, the last summer we stayed at the Seaside Club, there were fireworks on the Fourth and I kissed my first non-relative girl, if you don't count my girl cousin Teddy back in Greensboro. This girl's name was Candy. She was from Xenia, Ohio, a town obliterated that next spring by a terrible tornado. I stared at the unbelievable photos in *Time* magazine and never heard from her again. She wrote me twice before the twister struck, but I never wrote back.

They say your life is shaped by the people and places of your first ten years of life. If that's true, and I believe it is, I am seriously beholden to Jesse May Richardson and those long summer evenings when I learned to feet dance and love gospel music and the coolness of dusk lit by fireflies. I am indebted to the Seaside Club and my roaming beach tribe and Brad and his naked woman and Candy the pretty girl I kissed but never had the courage to write.

Summer may end too soon. But summer evenings, I have grown to believe, like a love of gardening and good Southern cooking, must stay with a soul forever.

Contact editor Jim Dodson at jim@saltmagazinenc.com.

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SaltWorks

Snap, Crackle, Pop

On Friday, July 4, if you aren't too full of watermelon and baked beans to leave the house, slink downtown for the Battleship Blast, one of the loudest, proudest celebrations this side of the Cape Fear River. *Ooh*, *aah* and be wowed as pyrotechnics light up the night sky — and USS *North Carolina* — starting at 9:05 p.m. Y'all come early. The view from the Riverfront is stellar. Historic Downtown Wilmington. Info: www.battleshipnc.com.

Salty Tales

While Johnny Depp's high cheekbones and dreamy brown eyes aren't entirely responsible for converting us into a nation of pirate-loving lubbers, they certainly played their part. But let's be honest: Captain Jack Sparrow doesn't hold a buckle to Stede Bonnet, aka, The Gentleman Pirate, whose plunderous real-life adventures with Blackbeard happened along our fabled coast. Don't miss the chance to see local playwright Zach Hanner's semi-biographical (and ultra hilarious) dinner musical about the Barbadian pirate our history teachers never told us about. *The Gentleman Pirate* opened at TheatreNOW on June 6, and runs Fridays and Saturdays through July 12. The three-course meal ends with keg-o-rum cake, although, frankly, they had us at the first leg: silver dollar hominy corn cakes topped with, aye, bacon. Show starts at 7 p.m. Tickets: $38; $24/children under age 12. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Rocket Science

Hear ye! Hear ye! Consider dog-earing that trashy romance novel and slathering up (sunscreen, folks!) for a ride that won't disappoint: flyboarding. Last year, a couple of "washed-up" (their words) surfer/skater dudes established Carolina Flyboards, an adrenaline-fueled water sport designed for sea nymphs, wave rippers, and everyone in-between. Basically, you strap on a jetpack and — heads up, seagulls — you're soaring — sometimes five to ten feet above the water. Instructor Matt Neal, who gives lessons out at Banks Channel, claims it's "like nothing else out there," but if you're any good at winter sports (like skiing or snowboarding), you may have a leg — or two — up. To rent a flyboard or schedule a lesson, call (910) 470-7544. Info: www.carolina-flyboard.com.

Dances with Oaks

Christmas in July? Not exactly. But a summer concert series among the ancient oaks spells e-n-c-h-a-n-t-e-d Airlie indeed. Declare your independence to dance on Friday, July 4, with live music by the Imitations (beach, soul and rock 'n' roll, y'all) from 6–8 p.m., and whatever liquid courage you happen to pack in your cooler. Once you've recovered from all that foot-stomping, return to the lawn on Friday, July 18, same time, for a night with L Shape Lot, four native sons whose Americana sound has this town plumb obsessed. Tickets: $9; $2/children (4–12); free for children under age 4. General admission parking is offsite at the Old Cinema 6 at 5335 Oleander Drive, right across from Jungle Rapids; free trolley service runs from the cinema to the Gardens. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

Seeing Spots

The dog days of summer have arrived, which is why this month's issue of *Salt* is chock-full of some of the cutest, smartest, most incredible canines in town. On pages 52–57, have a glimpse into the mind and studio of local painter Clair Hartmann, whose motley crew of doggy portraits was featured in the *Companions* exhibit at The MC Erny Gallery at WHQR earlier this year. In case you missed it, a selection of Hartmann's work will be on display at Sun Gallery and Gifts on Friday, July 18, from 5–8 p.m. Several of the paintings are from the artist's 2009 Downtown Dog Project, an ambitious pledge to paint one hundred dogs in one hundred days, but you'll see a few portraits of her own pups, Chumley and Frida, who happen to be extraordinarily photogenic (and won't sit still long enough for Hartmann to paint them from life). "I had a Dalmatian growing up," says Hartmann, who would pin down fish in Atlantic Beach, Florida. "I used to draw her while she was sleeping." Sun Gallery and Gifts, 4414 Wrightsville Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 443-6022 or www.sungalleryandgifts.com.

Balancing Act

Can you see them? Babies? Tumbling from the celestial heavens? "Tiepolo's Red" and other works by artist Sally Jacobs will be on display in *Excavations!*, a collection of paintings that record the psychological push and pull between mother and son. Jacobs, whose 5-year-old son serves as her muse, painted and studied in Florence, Italy, for a decade. See how the artist paints, er, draws inspiration from the masters, and how, as John Goodrich describes it, "a sequence of colors, at first unrecognizable, will crystallize as a highly individualized person." Opening reception from 6–9 p.m. Exhibit on view until August 9. Wilma D. Daniels Gallery, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7442 or cfcc.edu/blogs/wilmagallery.

Crowd Pleaser

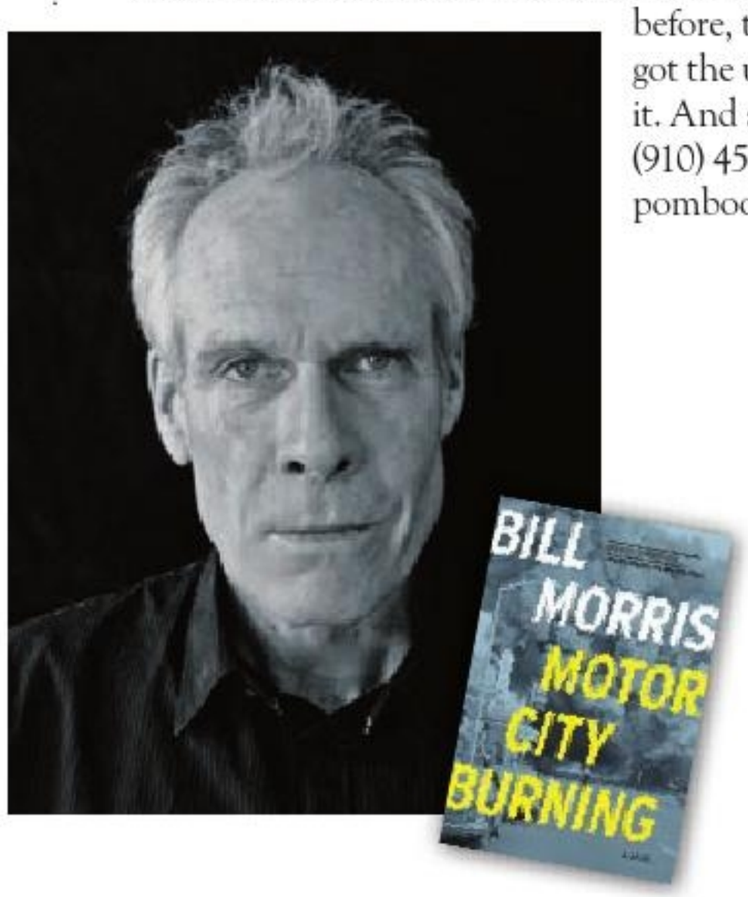
Finally, Opera Wilmington has arrived. Its debut production, an English translation of Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow,* features a local cast, sumptuous costumes, and music that will make you want to belt out. Performances will be held Friday, July 25, and Saturday, July 26, at 8 p.m.; Sunday, July 27, at 3 p.m. Tickets: $20; $10/children and students. A champagne reception for Opera Wilmington will be held prior to the performance on Friday, July 25; $60 (includes show). *Bravi*, new friends. UNCW Cultural Arts Building, Main Stage, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 962-3500. Info: www.opera-wilmington.org.

XOXO

Love is in the air. Whether or not its reciprocal depends, we suppose, on which musical you're watching. This month, Opera House Theatre Company presents the Broadway classic *On the Town*, the tale of three American sailors who, while on 24-hour shore leave in New York City, each fall cap over heels with enchanting women — and the City of Dreams. Show opens Wednesday, July 2, and runs through Sunday, July 20. Catch *Kiss Me, Kate*, the play-within-a-play featuring two divorced — and flamboyantly egocentric — performers starring opposite each other in a musical version of *Taming of the Shrew*, at the end of the month: Wednesday, July 30, through Sunday, August 17. Admission: $27. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

Man on Fire

When *Salt* magazine asked Greensboro author Bill Morris what inspired his latest novel, Morris became what Kurt Vonnegut would call "unstuck in time." It is the summer of 1968. Morris is working as a bar boy at Oakland Hills Country Club in the Detroit suburb. The Tigers have just won the World Series. The scene is thick with flashy cars, racial tension, and edgy new music. Such is the scene for *Motor City Burning*, a crime novel that draws from Morris' own experiences and observations as a young man growing up in the MC. On Tuesday, July 22, 7 p.m., Morris will read selections of his novel at Pomegranate Books, 4418 Park Avenue, Wilmington. He might even tell you how, after "a dozen major re-writes, four agents, and more rejections than I care to count," *Motor City Burning* sat in his desk drawer for several years before, thankfully, he got the urge to revisit it. And so it goes. Info: (910) 452-1107 or www.pombooks.net.

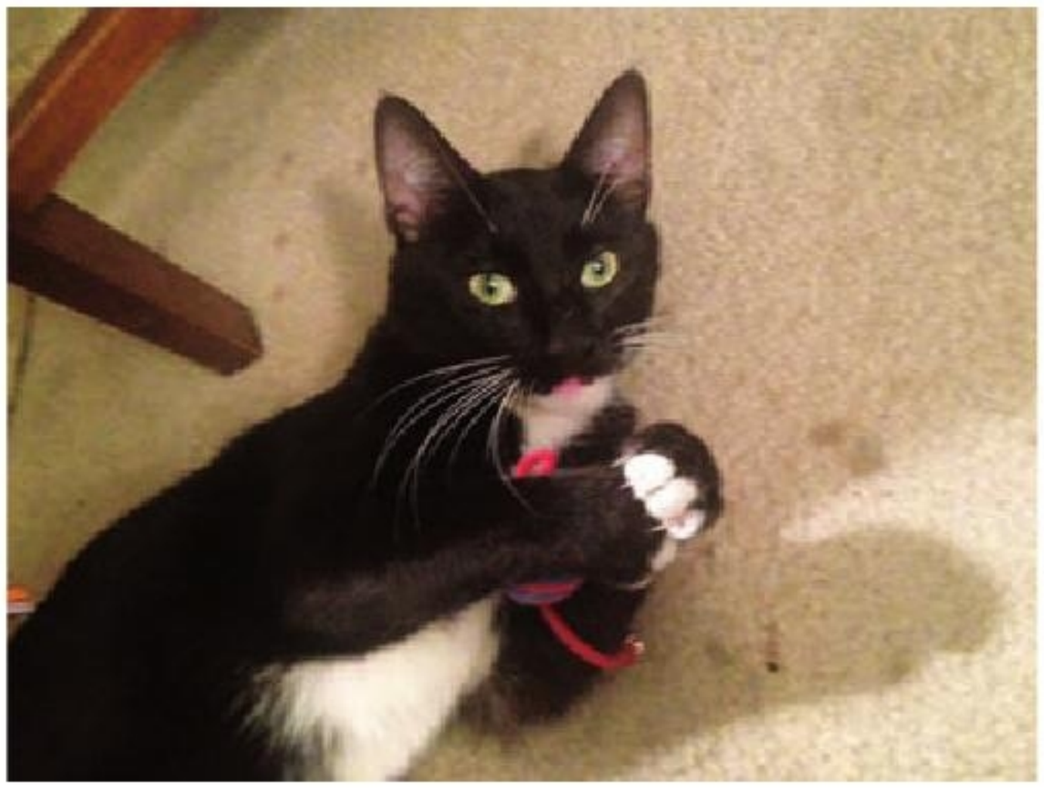


Once Upon a Time

Funny? Yep. Twisted? Most definitely. But the best part about this musical fairy tale is that it's happening over the river and through the woodsy stretch of Highway 17. Brunswick Little Theatre presents *Into the Woods* on Friday, July 25, and Saturday, July 26, at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, July 27, at 3 p.m. You'll meet familiar characters like Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Rapunzel, and Jack, the English chap you'll recall sold his mother's milk cow in exchange for a handful of magic beans. The kids will love it, too. Admission: $6–18. Odell Williamson Auditorium, Brunswick Community College, 50 College Road NW, Supply. Info: (910) 269-1518 or www.brunswicklittletheatre.com.

Mister

Sometimes it takes a village to raise a kitten



By Ashley Wahl

Mama Edith Paulmann will be the first to tell you that she isn't exactly a cat person. Never has been. Just ask her German shepherd, Miss Libby, who, at ninety pounds, hates cats with every fiber of her being. But this isn't a story about Mama Paulmann or Miss Libby. This is the tale of a cat named Mister.

* *

Mister didn't have a name when Edith's son, John Dunlea, first saw him. Well, maybe he did. But John didn't know it.

"He was always playing in the ditch along Peach Street," John says.

Rumor was he'd been abandoned.

So in the evenings, when John rang a tiny bell, Mister would emerge — from the bushes, from an upturned boat, perhaps from behind a neighbor's trashcan — for dinner on John's back porch.

Unlike his mama, see, John is a cat person. Two years ago, in fact, when a sickly all-black kitten appeared on his porch at Christmastime, he swiftly brought her inside and named her Boo Boo. But back to Mister . . .

He was sweet, sociable, skinny as a beanpole. He couldn't have been more than a year old.

"But I live in a small house," says John. "Two cats would be too many."

* *

When John is gone, Mama Edith feeds Boo Boo, now a perfectly healthy cat who spends her days by the window watching the birds.

"Can you feed the little tuxedo cat, too?" John asked his mother one winter day. "Ring the bell and he'll come running."

And so, although she isn't exactly a cat person, Mama Edith rang the bell, and sure enough, Mister appeared, purring like an engine, on the back porch. When he looked up, rubbing his spindly body against Edith's legs, something remarkable happened: Mama Edith fell in love.

"He was just the cutest little kitty," says Mama Edith. "So friendly and smart . . . I would have brought him home with me if it weren't for Miss Libby."

Make that two hearts that Mister has won.

* *

Sarah Walter rents space in a rambling house on Peach Street where she lives with her haughty old cat, Stinky. She was inside when she heard the visitor on her front porch.

"He was friendly with me the first time I met him," says Sarah of the kitten whose black and white coat made him look like a little gentleman.

That's why she called him Mister. And fell head over heels.

Sarah served him supper on the front porch and — don't tell the landlady — let him inside on cold winter nights.

* *

By day, Mister roamed the neighborhood like a gypsy and got fed by his faithful admirers. At night he was stalked by raptors. In spring, when a barred owl nearly snagged him, Mister escaped with a punctured shoulder. His tail was peppered the very next day.

* *

When Mama Edith Paulmann caught wind of the attacks, she was worried sick.

"We had to do something," says Edith. "That cat needed a home."

And so Edith approached one of her tenants, who just so happened to be Sarah Walter.

"If you can keep him," she said to Sarah, "I'll pay for the food and litter.

I'll even consider reducing the rent."

At this point, Sarah confessed: She'd been caring for the feline, too.

Although her own cat gave disapproving glares, Sarah agreed to be his temporary guardian.

**

Donna Bloomer of Adopt an Angel came when called. She took Mister to Fix A Friend in Winnabow, where he was neutered, vaccinated, and treated with antibiotics. "Grandmama" Edith financed the visit, and Sarah became his official foster mom. Once he recovers, said Donna, Adopt an Angel will help him find a permanent home.

**

It was clear that Mister wasn't happy at the Pet Supermarket. Sarah dropped him off on a Friday in hopes that someone would, yep, fall in love with him. He sulked at the back of his cage until Sarah came to pick him up.

The next day, before Sarah brought Mister back to Pet Supermarket, she said a prayer with him and gave him a big hug.

"We're going to find you a perfect home," she told him.

**

Although Shelly Baker says she never looks at the Adopt an Angel cats when she shops at Pet Supermarket — "I get upset and want to take them all home," she explains — she looked on Saturday.

When Mister saw Shelly, he made his way toward the front of the cage, as if he knew he was going home with her. He was obviously in love.

"I wanted to reach in and get him," says Shelly, but she "swallowed hard" and walked away.

Then, a neighbor called.

"Mister is up for adoption at Pet Supermarket," Joy told Shelly.

Let us rewind: Yes, Shelly had fallen in love with Mister in a past life (and different neighborhood). And, yes, she also knew him as "Mister." She and her husband had adopted two of his litter mates, but they always kept food out for Mister, who seemed to belong to the entire neighborhood.

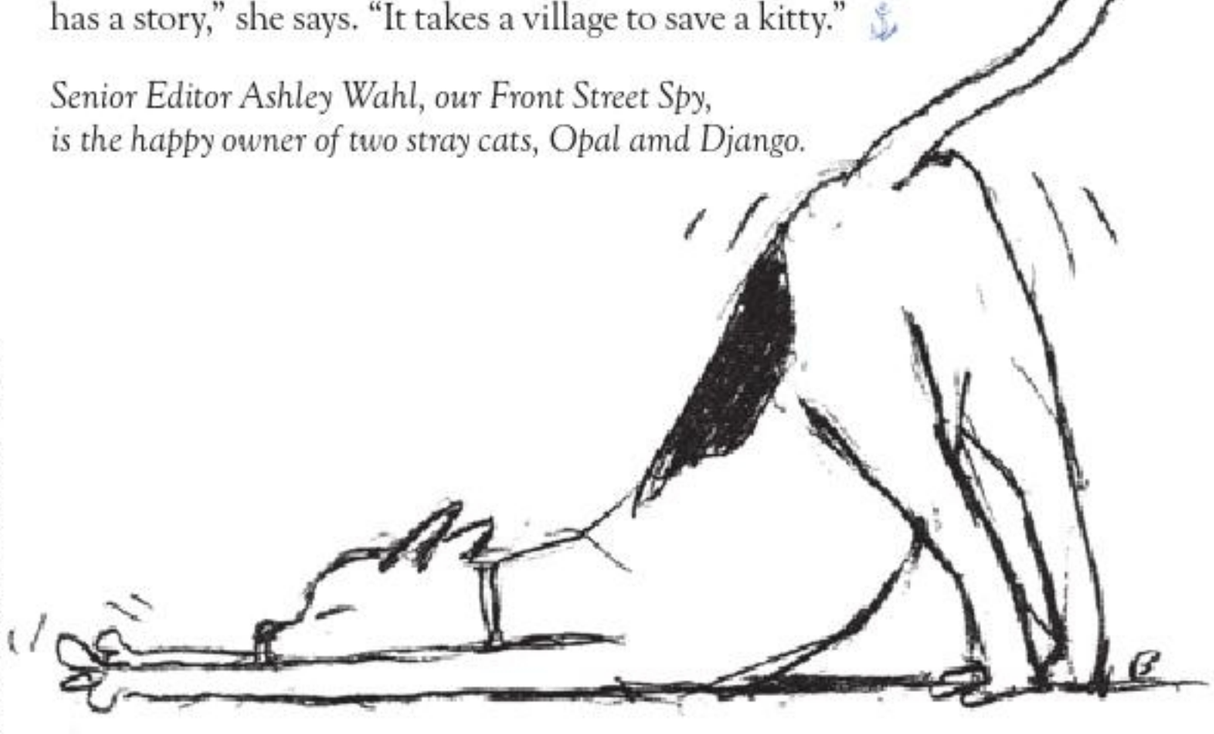
"We all knew he was special," Shelly remembers.

She signed the adoption papers the very next day.

**

When Donna Bloomer tells this story, she gets chills. But Donna believes in true love and magic. It's her job. "Every Mister has a story," she says. "It takes a village to save a kitty."

Senior Editor Ashley Wahl, our Front Street Spy, is the happy owner of two stray cats, Opal amd Django.



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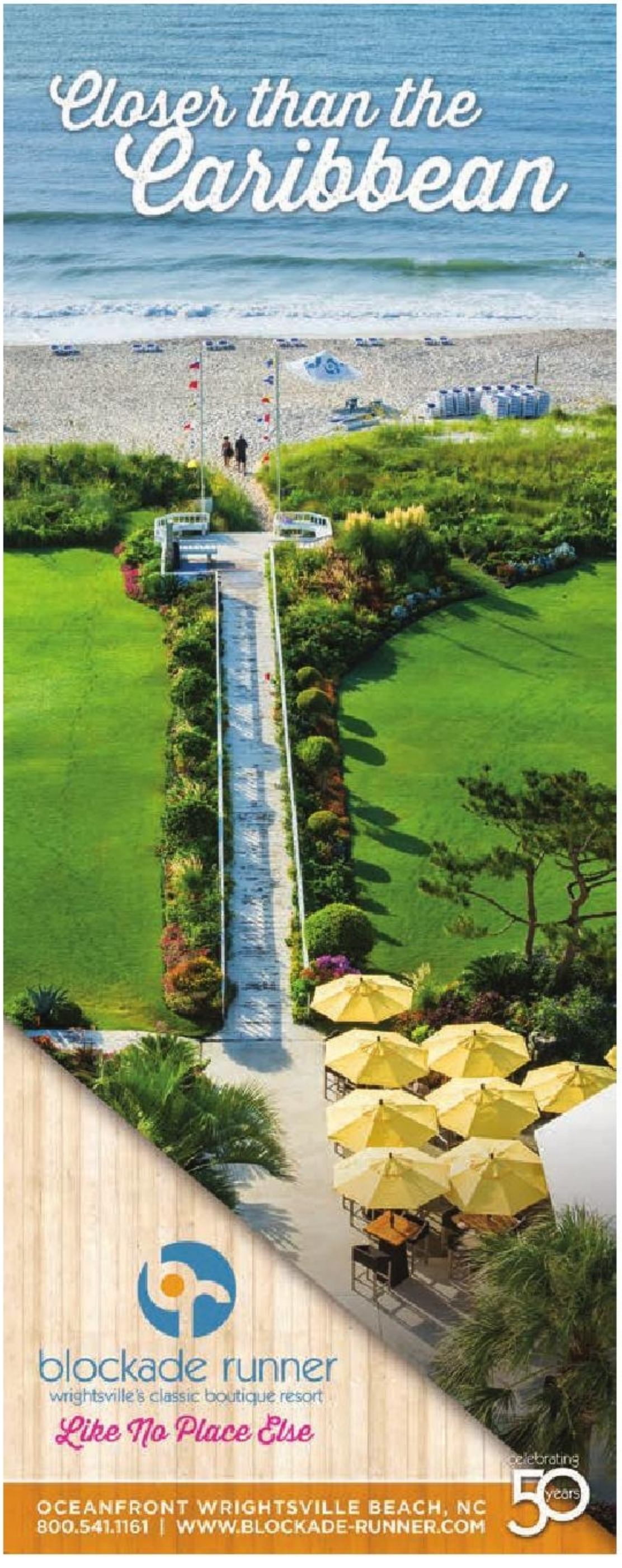

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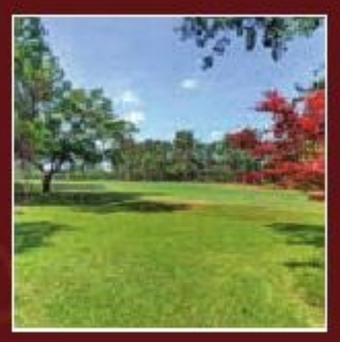

2290 Bella Coola Road — *Lake Waccamaw*

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Chunky and Gypsy

A man needs his best friend – even on the set

By Gwenyfar Rohler

"Everybody in the film industry knew Gypsy," says W.C. "Chunky" Huse, recalling his beloved lurcher and constant companion, Gypsy. "Everybody." He pauses to collect himself, then pushes on. "I thought he was going to live forever."

Chunky Huse has a career that legends are made of: *Star Wars*, *James Bond*, *Muppets*, *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *The Winds of War*, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, *The Last of the Mohicans* . . . the list goes on and on. Born and raised in England, like many of the old guards in North Carolina's film industry, Huse came here when Dino De Laurentiis built the movie studio off 23rd Street. Spending time with him is like having a behind-the-scenes documentary of all your favorite movies playing at once. He knows everyone and has been everywhere. Everyone who knows him calls him Chunky.

There is nothing Chunky enjoys as much as talking about his movie career, most of which has been spent as a key grip, the head of the department that supports the camera man. He's a born storyteller, and with that wonderful East London accent, he could charm the bloomers off Queen Elizabeth II. For me, the story that best sums up Chunky is his description of his "mate, Lil' Dickey," a reference that was dropped casually in our first conversation. It took me ten minutes to piece together who Chunky was talking about, when I finally blurted out, "Do you mean Sir Richard Attenborough?"

"Yeah," Chunky confirmed. "Me mate, Lil' Dickey."

Got it.

Well, there might be a few things Chunky enjoys more than his film career: his dogs, his Gypsy heritage, and his brilliant wife, Nini Rogan, whose career as a script supervisor includes *The Thomas Crown Affair*, *Ironweed*, and *84 Charing Cross Road*. As a breed, lurchers would be a natural choice for Chunky and Nini. Developed in the 1400s when commoners were not allowed to own greyhounds, lurchers are a crossbreed that has come to be associated with Gypsies. Chunky's dog was an authentic lurcher out of a Gypsy camp. "I called my son Malcolm, who lives in Ireland, and I said, 'I want a lurcher. I need a lurcher,'" Chunky recalls. After Malcolm had located a dog, Chunky flew to Ireland for a face to face meeting. "I think Malcolm had given them like thirty pounds of English money," he recounts. "I get there and I'm looking and I said, 'Where's the dog?'" There was a kennel with no roof, inside was a filthy looking animal with eight pieces of different ropes tied together to make one piece of rope. It had been raining, and the bed was wet. "Bloody hell," Chunky said to himself. "It is very, very rare that you get a white lurcher. Because if you're hunting at night, you don't want a white dog." Chunky chuckles and we pass over some of the less reputable parts of the lurcher's past. "I thought to myself, 'I can NOT leave this dog here'. . . We drove straight down to the vet in Dublin." Weeks passed as they waited first for the arrival of a rabies serum, which was necessary to allow Gypsy entrance to the United Sates, and then for the eight-day window before he could board the plane. Meanwhile, Chunky had to get back to start prep work for *G.I. Jane*. "I had to leave him. He looked at me – and now he's been washed, and brushed and fluffed – this beautiful dog. I said, 'Now, listen: I've got to go away. You are coming to the land of plenty.'"

A few weeks later, Gypsy arrived by plane. Chunky, who was knee-deep in *G.I. Jane*, showed up at the studio with the cuddly, sweet, white furry puppy, who immediately charmed everyone. "I took him on the set and he had 350 ready-made uncles and aunties to look out for him." He grins recalling the puppyhood of his best friend. "I still believe that his disposition and his love and his kindness all came from that." And so began a lifelong pattern for the both of them. "He was there every day on my truck until he was 14 years old, when he couldn't travel with me anymore."

Four years later Gypsy made his film debut in Martin Lawrence's *Black Knight*. "The director came in and said, 'I need to get Gypsy to take the chicken off the table' because the wolfhounds who were supposed to do it were terrified," Nini Rogan recalls. Rogan sat under the camera out of frame to direct Gypsy, and Chunky held him on the far side of the table facing the camera. It was midnight and everybody on the crew was convinced they weren't going to get home before five in the morning. Any experienced film technician will tell you that shots dependent upon dogs, children, fire or water take hours longer than anyone has planned for. On the first take, Gypsy carefully took the chicken from the table, walked over to Chunky and handed it to him. Rogan recounts that when they called, "Got it! Wrap!" from far back in the soundstage, a deeply relieved and very tired technician called back, "Gypsy ROCKS!"

Chunky used to drive to L.A. to take Gypsy with him rather than flying out for work. Almost twenty films later, Gypsy had more on-set experience than many film school graduates. Even better, he had the crews trained. "It was like *Lady and the Tramp*," Chunky laughs, recalling with glee how the catering guys would come out the back door and set Gypsy's breakfast on the ground before him.

"Every morning when we got to set he had scrambled eggs and bacon." Then he'd wander into the food tent, just like the rest of the crew, and sit beside Chunky, both of them ready to start another day of filming.

Gwenyfar Rohler fell in love with theater at Thalian Hall on her sixth birthday. She spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.

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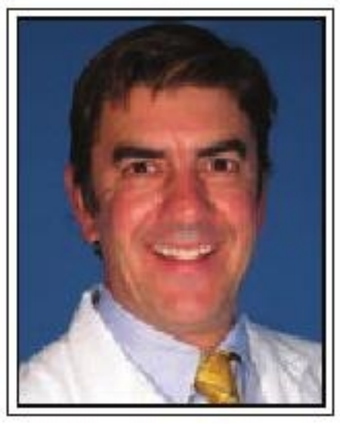

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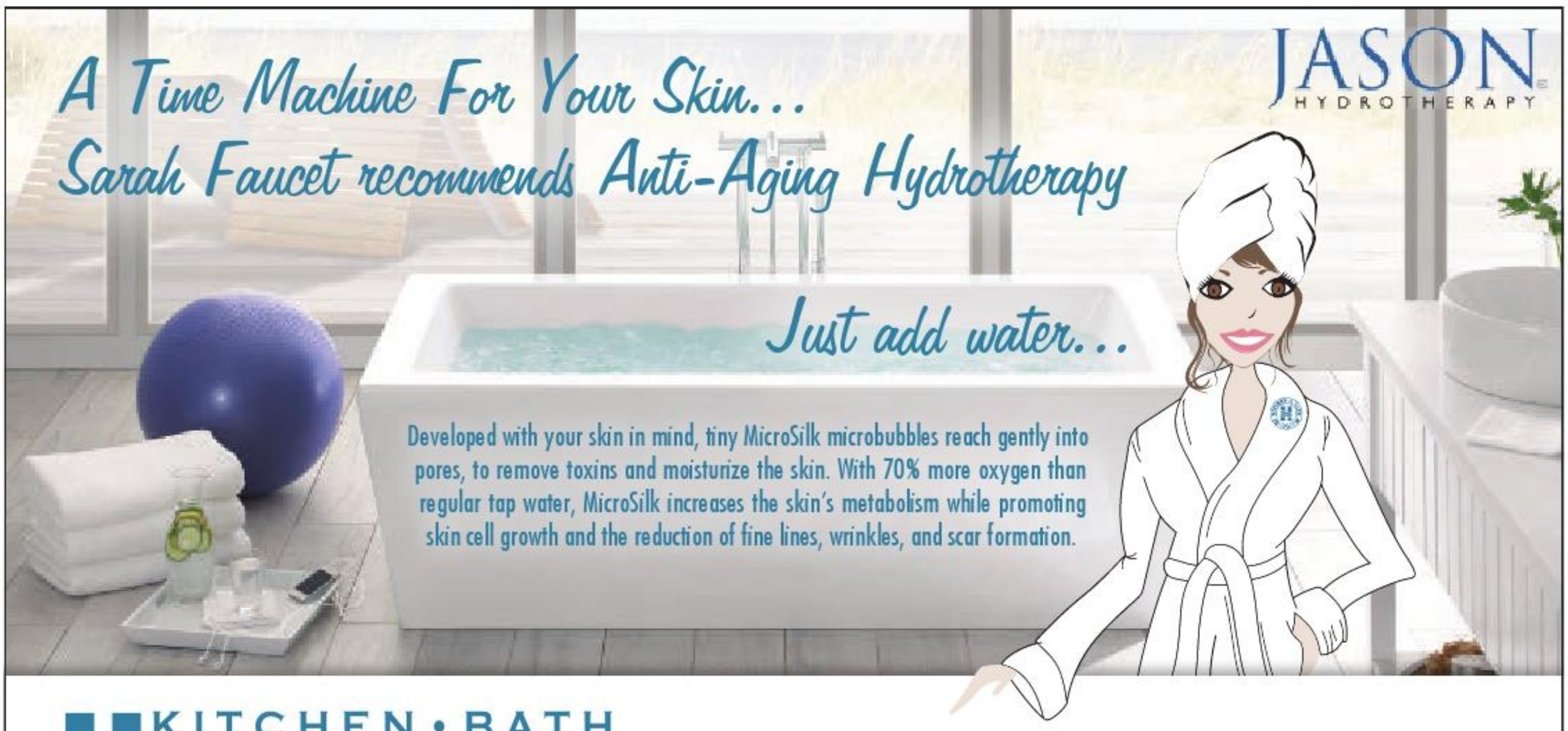
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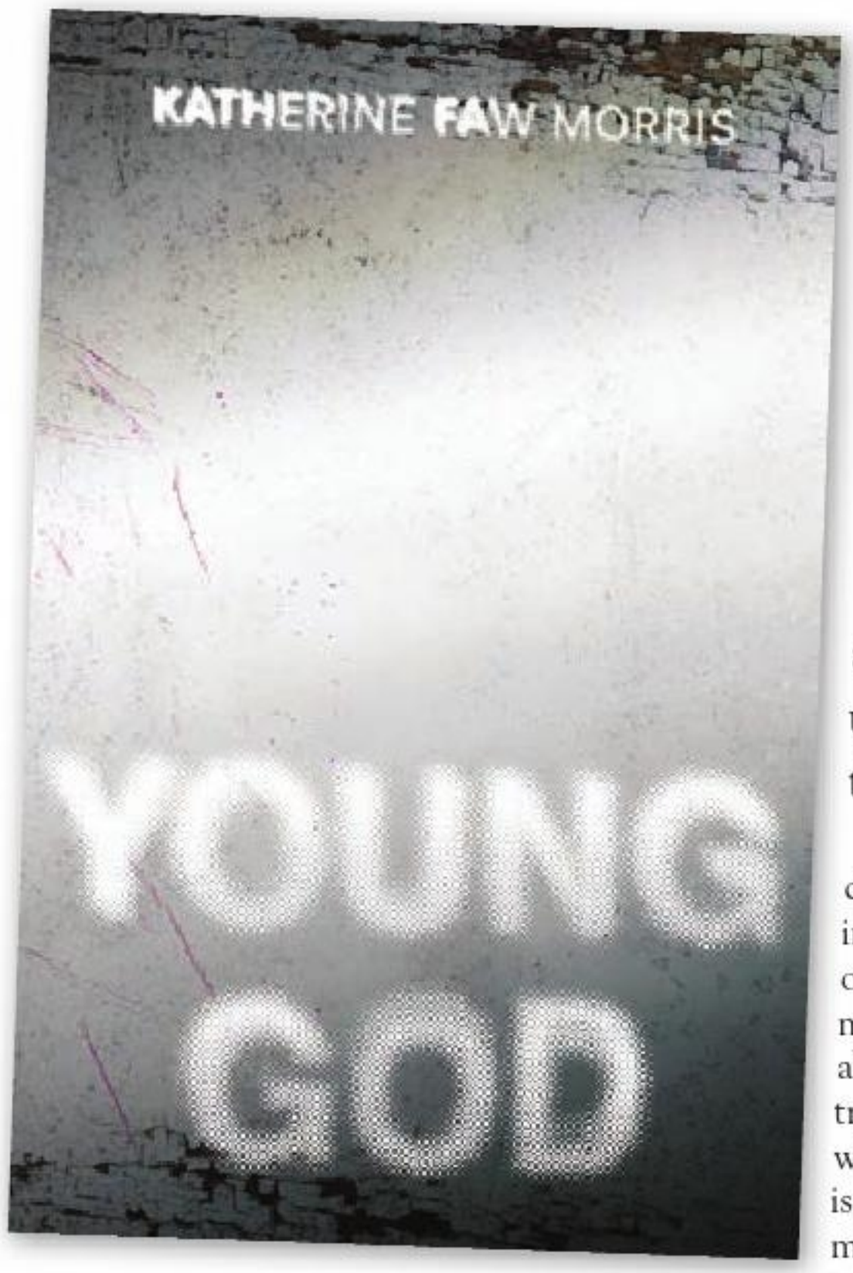
The Unseen South

An uncomfortable meditation on life at the bottom of rural Carolina culture



By Stephen E. Smith

The late-May arrival of Katherine Faw Morris's *Young God* in bookstores and on electronic media was preceded by a barrage of persuasive publicity. The debut novel was a Best Book of the Month selection from Amazon, and *The Huffington Post* and other mass-circulation newspapers and magazines ran gushy prepublication reviews. Blurbs cut and pasted from the dust jacket offered the requisite puffery: "This may be the best first novel I've read since *Fight Club*. It comes on like a few too many pulls of Wilkes County [NC] moonshine chased with some kind of punk rock Lucinda Williams and finishes with a hit of Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* and "a poetic, grim, and beautifully dark novel about backwoods violence and horror recounted in a numbed, laconic voice," etc. — all of which suggest a slightly more macabre twist on the usual down-home possum and sop. Morris's brief bio states that her novel is set in northwest North Carolina, where she was born and raised, so readers of Southern fiction might be led to expect a simpatico character or two, a few familiar landmarks, and an uplifting summer read. If they do, they're in for a surprise.

From the opening paragraph, it's abundantly clear that the characters in *Young God* might exist in any corrupt and violent environment, Southern or otherwise. The less-than-scenic descriptions may have a familiar feel — trash is piled up behind abandoned houses, "trash like toilets and mattresses" and "It's where Walmart is and the people who just got money live. The north side of town is steeper. It's where the people who've always had money live and also all the black people. There are Mexicans everywhere now" — but with the exception of an occasional place name, pickup trucks and singlewides, there are few genuine reminders of the hardscrabble South.

Readers who are used to expansive descriptions are likely to be taken aback by Morris's sinewy prose style, which consists of simple subject-verb-object sentences strung together in brief chapters, some of which are only a couple of words in length. "WHEN COY HAWKINS'S PHONE VIBRATES all of Nikki's veins shake," occupies an entire page of the already abbreviated narrative, and there are at least ten chapters that are no more than a short paragraph. The entire novel can be read in an hour or two.

And a disturbing tale it is. Nikki, the pink-haired, sexually active 13-year-old protagonist whose mother dies in the opening chapters, is forced to live in a dilapidated mobile home with her ex-con father, Coy Hawkins, who scrapes out a living as a drug dealer, part-time pimp and natural-born killer. There's not a lovable granny, a beer-guzzling redneck or even a sympathetic social worker to offer Nikki direction. Indeed, none of the characters, including the ruthless protagonist, is anything other than despicable.

The action is filtered through Nikki's drug-addled perception — "Her eyelids are tombstones. Her lungs are so slow. Nikki falls asleep in the shower and wakes up freezing. She sees purple mold everywhere" — and the lack of character description will force readers to rely on the sparse dialogue, grisly action and iniquitous Hollywood clichés to summon up a few bare-bone

images. The characters' only consistent motivation is drugs — alcohol, heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, oxy, meth, speed and crack — with the occasional clinical sex act thrown in for shock value. Violence is described in terse but graphic terms, and readers will likely find themselves reviewing passages to make sure they haven't misunderstood the action: "Coy Hawkins pulls the gun from his boot and shoots Renee in the face." Such unpleasant moments are followed by even more ghastly details that propel the narrative forward with unrelenting energy. Set in the moment, the novel succeeds in thrusting readers into a world they'd probably like to ignore. So be forewarned: There's no hint of the quaint quirkiness of the Old South to be found in the 200 pages of *Young God*.

But therein lies the value of Morris's novel. Readers are introduced to a subculture where everyone is focused on acquiring drugs for personal use or for sale, a circumstance where no course of action is too extreme. If readers would rather deny this reality, it's nonetheless present in North Carolina. The evening news, with its gruesome stories of child abuse, drug arrests and murder is evidence enough that Morris's cold-blooded world isn't altogether fictional.

But the larger question raised by *Young God* doesn't concern prose style or even content. Readers who make it through to the shocking conclusion will be left to contemplate the novel's theme or purpose and its obvious lack of resonance. If the Nikki character lacks positive development — she is, by the end of the novel, nothing more than a ruthless, drug-befuddled castoff — what are we to take away from *Young God*? Are we to believe that the novel doesn't really mean anything? And why should we waste time reading about such abominations?

Like Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, which is more uplifting, or Hubert Shelby's *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, which is equally degrading, Morris's novel is an uncomfortable meditation on the human condition, a fictionalized but representative view of contemporary life in its most unpleasant manifestation, a reminder of the circumstances under which we live.

The Russian writer Maxim Gorky, who knew of horrors aplenty, said it best: "I have no desire to make anyone miserable, but one must not be sentimental, nor hide the grim truth with the motley words of beautiful lies. Let us face life as it is! All that is good and human in our hearts needs renewing."

Amen to that.

Stephen E. Smith's most recent book of poems is A Short Report on the Fire at Woolworths. *He can be reached at travisses@hotmail.com*

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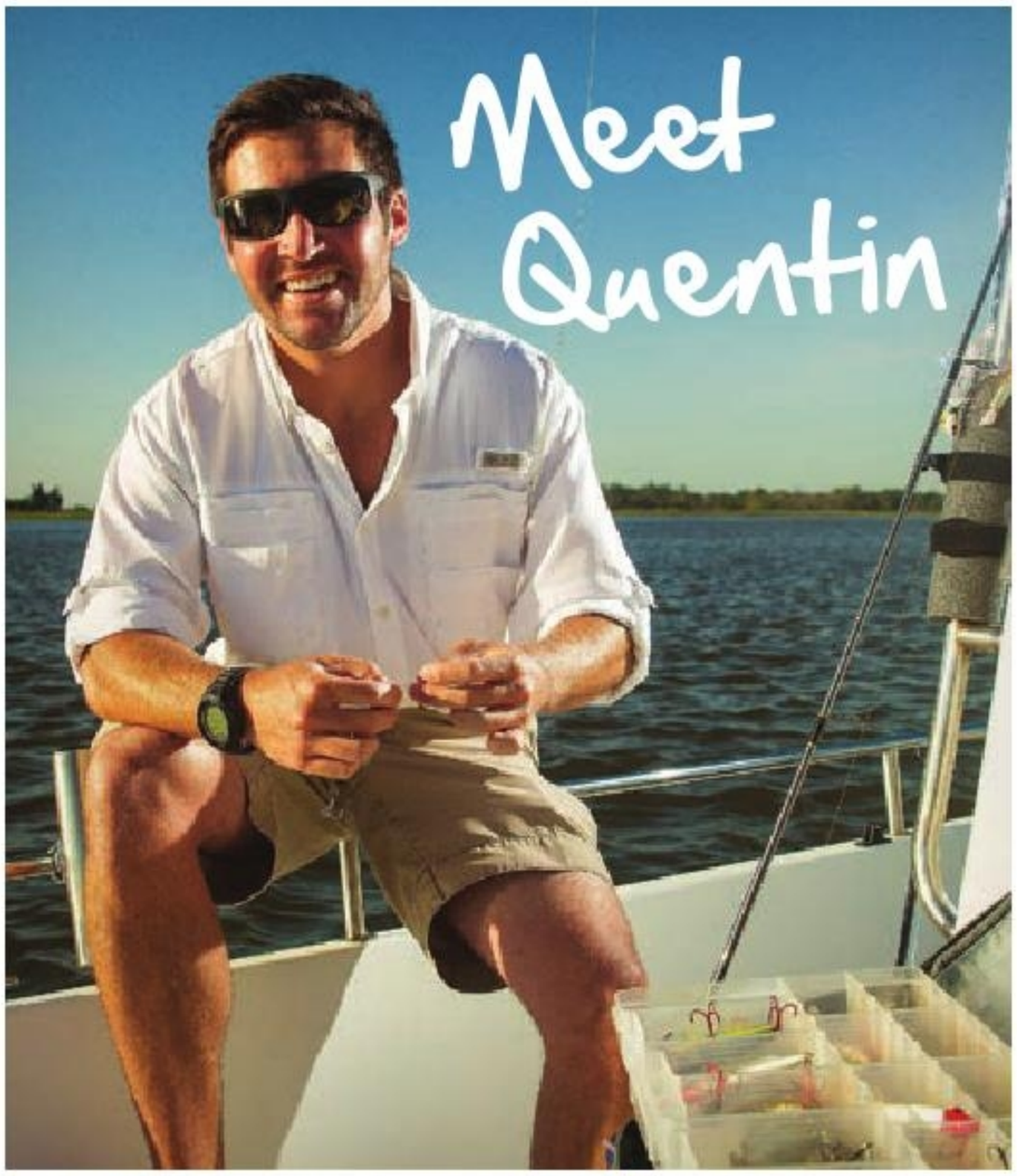

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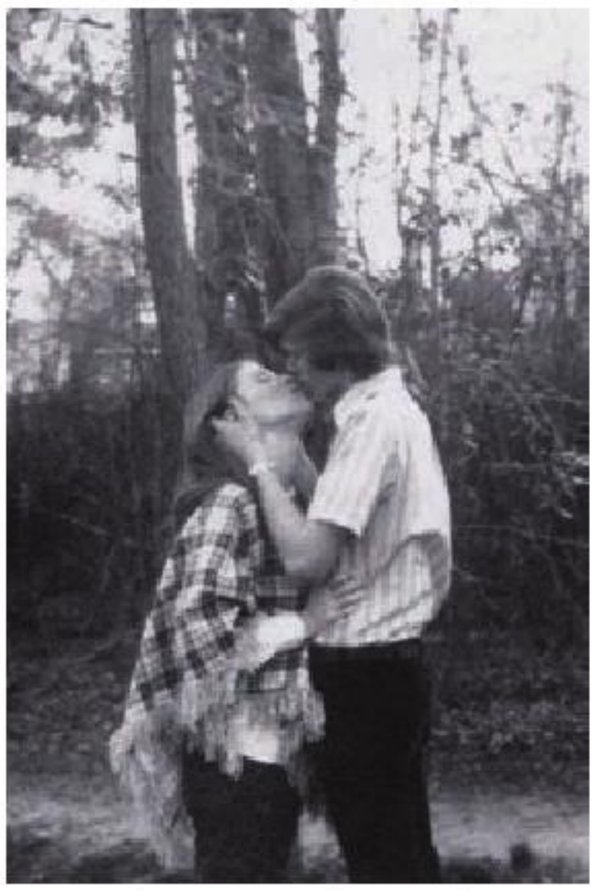

Perfect Timing

By JoAnne Silvia

My heart was pounding as I read the Facebook message again:

Greetings to you! After many years I hope you are well. Take care and be safe!

Could it really be him after all these years? My mind raced back to the fall of 1971.

It was our first real high school party. Posters of Bob Dylan and psychedelic flowers decorated my friend Terry's garage. We opened with Led Zeppelin, or maybe it was Black Sabbath. I noticed David as soon as he walked in because he was clearly taller than me. At five-foot-eight, I was still awkwardly taller than most guys my age.

He smiled at me and came over to where I was perched on a storage trunk.

"Do you mind if I join you?" he asked

"No, I don't mind," I managed to say with a smile as I scooted over.

We made small talk about who we knew at the party. I'd never seen David at school before. He told me his family had moved to North Carolina from Connecticut a few months ago when his father retired from the Army. My dad had been a Marine, so I remembered what it was like to be the new kid. When we discovered we were both taking French, we practiced our French dialogue. I studied David's bluish-gray eyes. They were caring and honest. I instinctively felt safe with him.

We dated through the rest of tenth grade. I felt so loved and cherished. Then David's family moved back to Connecticut. We didn't even get to spend the summer together. Looking back, that was probably a good thing, but at 16 I felt like my world was falling apart.

I wrote four letters to David. He answered the first two. Then nothing. Not a word for nearly four decades. Now, in 2011, he was finally reaching out to me with this simple little message that took my breath away.

Get a grip! I told myself. *He's just saying hello. People can change a lot in thirty-nine years. He could be crazy.*

I'd had enough of crazy. After a year of insanity in an unsafe post-divorce rebound disaster, and three challenging years with Mr. Not Quite Right, I was ambivalent about romance. I read books about the advantages of being single. Look at all the accomplishments of single women. Consider Mother Teresa!

Twenty years of marriage had given me two extraordinary children and plenty of experience struggling to find quality time for my spouse, job, kids and self. Maybe twenty years of marriage was enough.

But deep down, I still longed for a partner. Someone who would be a good fit. When I saw a couple walking hand in hand on the beach or along the river, I felt like I was missing something. After five years of being single and celibate, I asked God to take away the desire for a partner . . . or send a good one.

Every January, I made a collage about my hopes for the year ahead. There was always a little something there about a compatible partner. He had to love dogs. That was non-negotiable. The unconditional love of dogs had helped me through tough times over the years. My two dogs were part of my family.

I finally made a deal with myself, in early 2011, to stop looking for a partner (especially online) until my daughter graduated from high school.

David's message came two days after she graduated.

Listening to the debate between my hopes and fears, I remembered the words my dad told me when I was 12. He was finishing up his twenty-year career with the Marines at Camp Lejeune. The plan was to move back to Pennsylvania. By that time, I had lived in eleven homes in eight different states plus Canada. I was tired of moving.

"Is it *impossible* for us to stay in North Carolina?" I whined.

"Nothing is impossible," Dad stated in the clear philosophical tone he used to convey something he wanted me to remember my whole life.

This shut me up for a while and gave me something to think about.

We actually made it to Pennsylvania, but the deal fell through on the house. When Dad found out our furniture was still in North Carolina, Mom suddenly revealed that she never wanted to leave North Carolina either. So, we headed back down South, reinforcing the magical belief in my adolescent brain that anything is possible.

I decided to take a chance and answered David's message with the excitement I really felt. As we progressed to phone calls, he sounded very interesting. David was still living in Connecticut. He had *three* dogs and talked about them like they were family. But I had to be careful. I had to keep my feet on the ground.

I told David about my fears.

"You can ask me anything," he said. "Nothing's off the table."

"Good, because I have a lot of questions," I responded.

"What are you doing on July 15?" he asked.

"It turns out I'm free that day. Why?"

"How about dinner?"

"You're going to come all the way down here to take me to dinner?"

"Yep. I want to know who you've become."

I took a deep breath. "OK. It's a date."

We were both nervous and excited about our second first date. During dinner, David answered my questions and asked a few of his own. We'd both learned hard lessons during our time apart. After dinner, we walked along the riverfront. He offered me his arm, which I accepted, as a gentle breeze came off the river. When the sun started to sink toward the horizon, we sat down on a bench to watch. We continued to share stories about our lives. I could tell that David had become a man of integrity. It felt natural to lean back against him and let his strong arms hold me gently. His kiss awakened feelings I had not felt in a very long time.

Was it possible that our high school romance, all those years ago, was only the beginning?

JoAnne Silvia is currently working on her memoir, Perfect Timing, Lessons in Love, Faith and Perseverance, *with her husband (and high school sweetheart), David. You can find her at www.facebook.com/Joanne.M.Silvia.*

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N.C. WRITER'S Notebook

By Sandra Redding

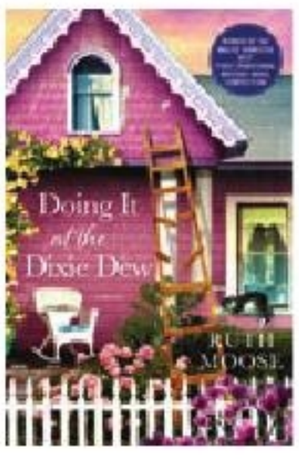
You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence . . . with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is patriotism.
– Erma Bombeck

Summer Events

July 10–13 (Thursday through Sunday) Campus of William Peace University, Raleigh. Sign up for one of three workshops at the Squire Summer Writing Residency taught by top-notch instructors: Scott Huler, Randall Kenan and Shelby Stephenson. www.ncwriters.org

July 25–26 (Friday and Saturday) Clarion Inn, Fletcher. The North Carolina Writers Conference was once likened to a Capistrano of swallows by Greensboro writer/historian Hal Sieber. A few years after the first meeting (1950), Southern Pines poet and editor Sam Ragan became the group's guiding light. Members and guests still gather annually to catch up, celebrate. During Saturday's banquet, Kathryn Stripling Byer, former N.C. Poet Laureate, will be honored. perrythechief@gmail.com

July 29 (Tuesday, 5:30 p.m.) Letters Bookshop, Durham. Ruth Moose, popular Pittsboro poet and teacher, will read and sign her first mystery novel, *Doing It at the Dixie Dew.* In this amusing who-done-it, bed and breakfast owner Beth McKenzie and a rabbit named Robert Redford search for a killer. www.RuthMoose.com



We are all of us stars, and we deserve to twinkle.
– Marilyn Monroe

Four stellar poets will be inducted into the 2014 North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame on October 12 (Sunday, 2 p.m.) at Weymouth Center for Arts & Humanity in Southern Pines:

• Betty Adcock. Texas born, she has lived all her writing life in North Carolina. A natural — no degrees but plenty of smarts — she's written six books and has read her verses at over 100 colleges and universities. A Guggenheim fellow in 2002, her lyrics are intricate as lace.

• Ronald Bayes. A beloved former writer-in-residence at St. Andrews College, Bayes created a writing program that nurtured poets. Yet his writing, ignoring magnolias and other Southern fixtures, never acquired Southern sensibility. Instead, his brilliant verses sparkle with satire and universal truth. *The Casketmaker* is a compilation of his finest poems.

• Jaki Shelton Green. This Durham creativity coach teaches and reads throughout the United States, South America and Europe. Some of the poems from her seven books of verse have been choreographed. Look for poems about both Martin Luther King and Senator Jesse Helms in *Conjure Blues.*

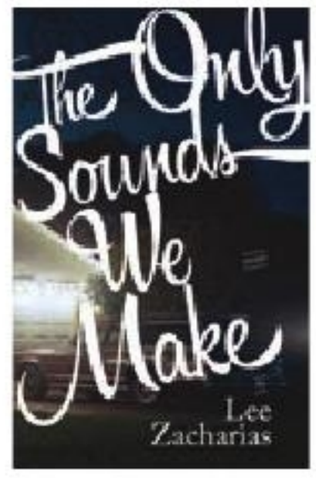
• Shelby Stephenson. Former revered teacher and editor of *Pembroke Magazine* at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, this seven-time author packs his lyrics with pathos and humor. In music and verse, he praises his forebears and honors Benson, the hometown he never left. His latest collection, *The Hunger of Freedom*, was published this year.

Poetry is a verbal means to a nonverbal source. It is a motion to no motion, to the still point of deep realization.
– A.R. Ammons

Before his death in 2001, A.R. Ammons published nearly thirty collections of poetry, many of them about his family and boyhood home. This Columbus County native was awarded fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In his honor, Southeastern Community College of Columbus County has established an A.R. Ammons Scholarship to reward "a student who embraces the written word." www.sccnc.edu/Home/ARAmmonsLiteracyScholarship

All writers speak from, and speak to, emotions eternally the same in all of us.
– Eudora Welty

Released in May, *The Only Sounds We Make,* by Greensboro writer Lee Zacharias, contains thirteen essays grounded in reason, resonating with emotion. One, "Geography for Writers," explores the various spaces where she and other notable writers, from Eudora Welty to Jill McCorkle, have found the words they need to write. In "Morning Light," Zacharias uses her photography skills to pinpoint the value of capturing color and light. A strong sense of place, a sensibility that forgives the fragility of human nature and an enduring connection to a changing world make this a book worth reading and remembering.



Bookstores and organizations, if you have a major event, let us know. Writers, if you have published a book in 2014, we want to hear about it.

Greensboro writer Sandra Redding's novel, Naomi Wise: A Cautionary Tale, *is a riveting story about heartbreak and hope in a Quaker community. Email her at sanredd@earthlink.net.*

Of Brie and Bouillon Spoons

At Le Catalan, antiques appraisal expert John Bankson shares his love of good cheese and vintage flatware

By Dana Sachs

You find a box with some of your grandparents' old flatware, nicely wrapped in tissue paper. The cache is like an archeological record of the habits of an extinct culture: twelve bouillon spoons, twelve oyster forks, twelve demitasse spoons, and eleven fruit knives. Are they valuable? What do you do with them?

You could call John Bankson, a certified appraiser with the Appraisers Association of America. The AAA's strict code of ethics prevents its members from getting involved in sales and purchases of items. In other words, they won't tell you that your set of oyster forks is worth $20, pay you $20 for them, then go out and re-sell them. Instead, they appraise your items' worth and let you do what you want with them.

"There are a lot of unscrupulous people," John told me over lunch at Le Catalan, the French café and wine bar on the Riverwalk downtown. "Certified appraisers serve as the buffer between the client and the people who want to take advantage of them."

Though qualified to appraise a wide variety of objects, John specializes in maps, books and manuscripts, fine silver, firearms, and Southern furniture. A lot of his work involves digging through dusty boxes, examining the backs of chairs for scratches, and scouring the Internet for information on old books.

In other words, it doesn't seem like the most sociable profession. Spend any time talking with John, though, and you'll see that it's really fun. For one thing, he not only runs his own appraisal business, but also uses his knowledge of antiques to work as a property master on local television shows and movies. John got Richard Cetrone, *Sleepy Hollow's* Headless Horseman, the Benelli 12-gauge shotgun that he packs this season. As often as possible, he tries to use actual period objects on his sets. "I love the authenticity of films," he told me. Although he didn't work on *Shakespeare in Love*, he still admires the fact that "Gwyneth Paltrow brushed her teeth with a stick."

John's passion for history and old objects carries over into his work as an appraiser. And if you, like me, have a little *Antiques Roadshow* in your DNA, then it sounds just as exciting, too. For example, he once found a Paul Revere print "in a box in a closet in Charleston," which later sold for over $80,000. "That was fun," he said.

A few years ago, John conducted a full inventory and appraisal of the contents of the famed Orton Plantation. During that process, he came across an 1867 pamphlet that included the grids of gravesites from the Civil War Battle of Antietam, a practical resource that allowed families to locate the burial sites of their loved ones. He also discovered a small book, printed in the 1640s, that included the first published map of Wilmington (and which later sold at auction for nearly $100,000). In a trunk in one of the plantation outbuildings, John found a pair of World War I Navy dress white trousers wrapped around another object — a Native American headdress with seventy-eight bald eagle feathers on it. The piece, which was later determined to be either southern Cheyenne or northern Ogalala, was probably traded for by Orton's owner, James Sprunt, on a trip through the Midwest.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

"In a European auction, where restrictions on eagle parts sales are less stringent, it might have sold for half a million dollars," John said, "but those bald eagle feathers made it illegal to sell because of the Endangered Species Act." The piece ended up being repatriated to the tribe through the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh.

His clients haven't always hit the jackpot. One woman paid for him to travel to Baltimore to investigate a print that she thought was an original John James Audubon. It wasn't. "She cried right in front of me," John said. Another family asked him to value a portrait of George Washington by Rembrandt Peale, the son of illustrious painter Charles Willson Peale and not, as it turns out, as talented. That family "thought they had the farm," John said, and were subsequently deeply disappointed to hear that the print wasn't worth more than $5,000.

When we met for lunch, John brought along a few pieces of flatware from his own collection: a simple and elegant coin silver serving spoon, dated between 1780 and 1820, stamped with the insignia of A. G. Reed & Co. of Nashua; a whimsical spoon with a beaded silver curlicue adorning the handle, made by famed Danish manufacturer Georg Jensen; and an ornate pair of sterling silver sugar tongs.

Le Catalan's menu, which includes classic French dishes like pâté, quiche Lorraine, and a deservedly famous chocolate mousse, seems to cry out for fine silver, but John's oversized spoons and sugar tongs just weren't practical for eating lunch. He did use the sugar tongs to grab a bag of Splenda, though.

Happily, ordinary flatware did not diminish the taste of our food. We started with a plate of cheeses and pâté, which included slices of smooth brie and a more pungent morbier (a type of gruyère with a vein of blue running through it), hearty pork pâté, tiny cornichon pickles, chunks of baguette and generous amounts of fresh butter which, on a platter like this one, the French consider *de rigueur*. Our crab salad arrived on a bed of organic spinach, the fresh backfin crab mixed into a creamy combination of mayonnaise, yogurt, garlic and lime juice, with dashes of ketchup and hot sauce adding kick and color.

Le Catalan, unlike some restaurants, does not try to serve everything (sushi and hummus, anyone?). Rather, it does a few things very, very well, adding daily specials for variety. For our lunch, we tried one of those, a richly flavored saffron-laced orzo pasta and shrimp gratin. "The saffron is subtle," John said. "Sometimes saffron knocks you out, but this is perfect. And I love orzo because it's kind of like pasta but it's also like rice. It's a tweener."

John comes from two very old American families. His first toy as a kid was an antique bagatelle, a traditional wooden table-top billiards game, and his early connection to beautiful objects is part of the reason, he says, that "I'm so passionate about what I do."

Simply put, John marvels over the things that humans create. "Why do some cultures make something so beautiful?" he asks. "Apache baskets, Meissen porcelain. Why do some cultures do that?"

And what about that flatware you found in the closet? If you call him, John will ask you a basic question first: "Is it sterling or silver-plate?" English and American sterling since the eighteenth century always bears an inscription saying as much. Without the inscription, it's silver-plate, whose value is mostly sentimental. But "sentimental" counts, too, so cherish those bouillon spoons and go ahead and call them priceless.

Le Catalan, at 224 South Water Street, is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11:30 a.m. "until . . ." For information, call (910) 815-0200 or visit www.lecatalan.com. If you're interested in property appraisal, you can find John Bankson at banksonappraisalswilmington.com, at (910) 512-2502, or at johnbankson@me.com.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores throughout Wilmington.*

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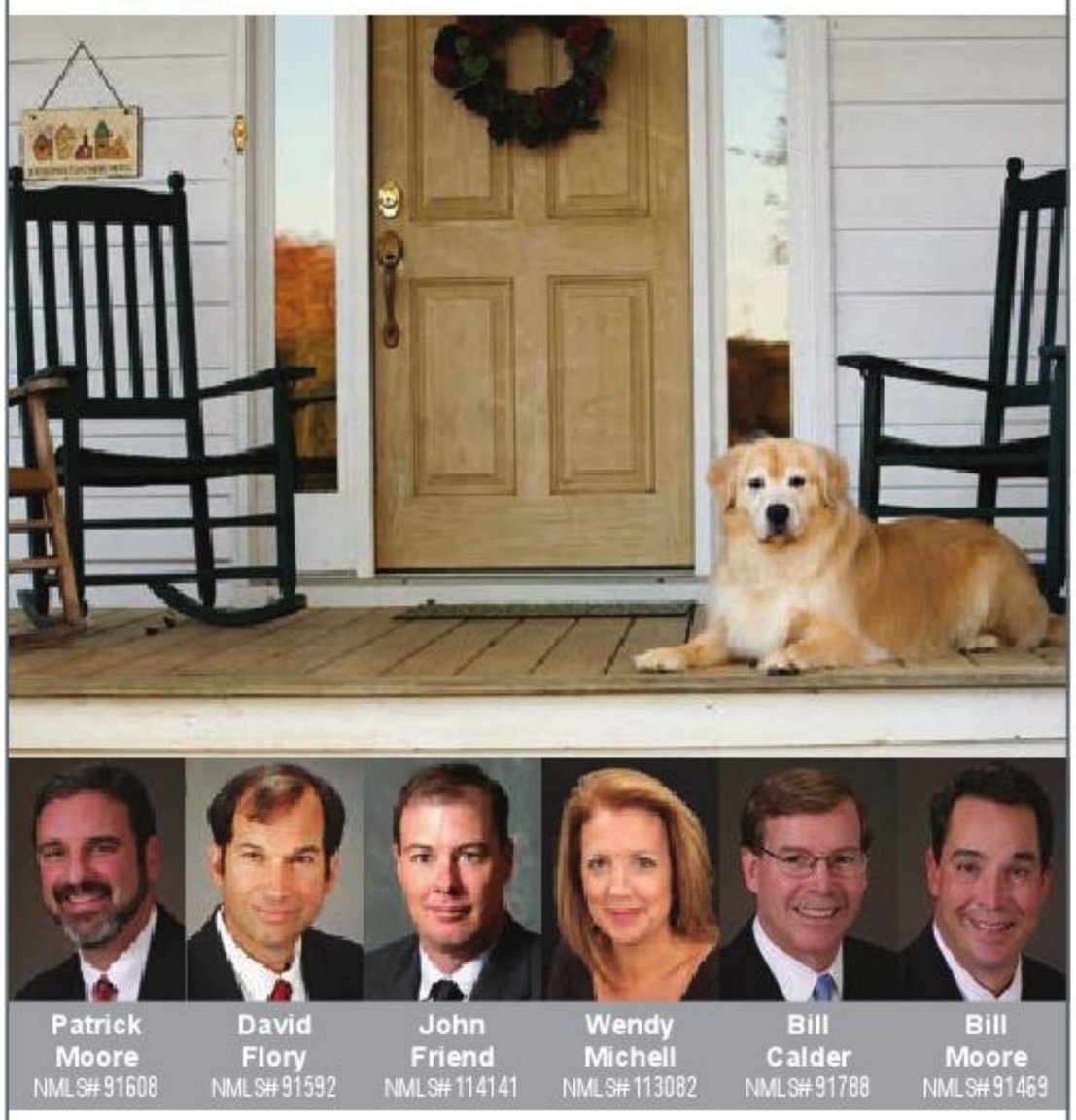

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A Welcome Salty Life

Wilmington's burgeoning literary scene has us telling tales like never before

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Jason Frye

In Moonpie's defense, I did look like a madman, hair to my shoulders, beard halfway down my chest, so I don't blame her for barking at me in the middle of the first reading of my MFA career. If I were a feisty little terrier mutt and some bearded weirdo invaded my kitchen, I'd have barked at me too.

Wilmington's literary scene has grown considerably since I arrived in town as an MFA student more than a decade ago. Then, the only outlets were the monthly readings at some classmate's too-small apartment and the rare reading/open mic night at some coffee shop or wine bar downtown. Blogs weren't really a thing and there were no print outlets to speak of, so anything writing-related (for many of us, anyway) came from within a small community with whom we spent many waking (and quite a few sleeping) hours with.

Now, though, Wilmington's grown, and if you're into the literary scene, there are book clubs; critiquing groups both open and invite-only; poetry slams; open-mic readings (still a little sporadic); and, between UNCW's offerings, Cape Fear Community College's growing creative community, and Pomegranate Books, there are plenty of readings to attend.

Now we have *Salt* (which I am a little biased towards, I'll admit), which gives opportunities to writers in the community to take part (both in Salty Words and our 1,000 Word Memoir Contest); and the writing in other community magazines has improved dramatically. In the *StarNews*, Ben Steelman, John Staton, and a bevy of freelancers help keep us abreast of the best in books, movies, theater, and art around town. And the recent formulation of an arts council is already having impacts on the literary, dramatic, and visual arts scenes in the region, doling out grants and offering support at levels heretofore (a word that's underutilized) unknown.

Most of our literary happenings are downtown, and one of the newest, and best, additions is Bourgie Nights, beside Manna on Princess Street. I saw my friend Taylor Brown read from his debut collection of short stories there, and his was one of several literary events they've held in the swank spot with, reportedly, more on the way.

For the last few months, Old Books on Front Street has been playing host to Speak Easy, a literary event that's one part reading, one part storytelling, one part competition. The organizers, an MFA student and a poetess who works in the UNCW Publishing Laboratory as an editor and book designer, throw out a prompt for storytellers to chew on, then on the last Friday of the month, people gather in the back room, a microphone and spotlight appear, and the bold (and often hilarious) stand in front of the crowd to spin their story. The winner gets a prize. Once it was a painting of a panda. It wasn't a good painting, but the prize isn't the point, it's the act of creating and sharing.

And that's the point here, creating and sharing. Every month, *Salt* looks at artists and writers and musicians and creative sorts around the region and shares their stories. We look back at the history of the place — at the folks who laid the foundation on which Wilmington's creative community presently builds — and at the folks who will be the future of our arts community. We spy on events around town. We scratch our heads and wonder, *What is this so-called spirit animal I found at the bar?* (I'm on the case, hunting for the originator of these crafty little ceramic beasts.) We go to concerts and plays and exhibitions and celebrate the people that keep this town's artistic spirit alive. We hope to add something lasting to it. And we believe we are.

Jason Frye is a travel writer and author of Moon North Carolina and Moon NC Coast. *He's a barbecue judge, he rarely naps, and he's always on the road. Keep up with his travels at tarheeltourist.com.*

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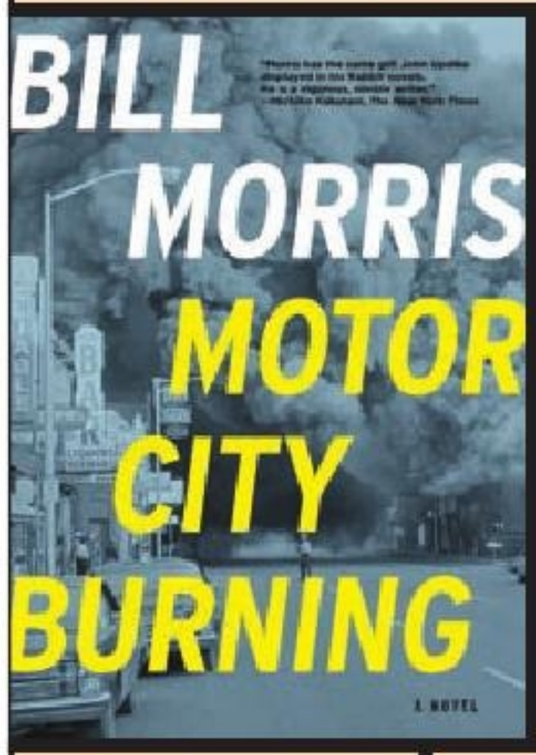

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A Peaceable Kingdom

A fence, a fawn and a coyote

By Bill Thompson

Incongruous, incompatible, mismatched, unsuited, contradictory. Those are some of the words that came to mind as I was taking my semi-regular evening walk the other day. I came upon a scene that was so unlikely (Aha! There's the simple word I was looking for) that I had to actually stop and see if my eyes were deceiving me.

Behind my house is a fenced-in area comprised of several hundred acres of fields and woodland. Ordinarily, a chain-link fence wouldn't be necessary since the crops and trees aren't going anywhere and no one is coming to take them away. However, in this case, the fencing is to keep a large number of coyotes as part of a hunting preserve. Actually, it's not your ordinary hunting preserve, since no guns are allowed on the property. The coyotes are there as a major element of the hunt that involves only the chase. And the animals, dogs and coyotes, are well cared for. It's kinda like a big outdoor kennel for coyotes. I often hear their yelps and howls at night as I sit on the back deck of my house. Sometimes there is a canine symphony as the coyotes and dogs that live in a standard kennel on the same property fill the night with their respective musical offerings. The idea of the preserve is to provide a venue where the chase and the ensuing sounds provide enjoyment to the owners of the animals.

But on the particular evening of my walk there was no canine symphony. It had rained a little that day and the grass was still damp. The tip of my shoes had turned dark as I walked through the wet pasture on the periphery of the preserve. As usual on these forays, I let my mind wander: I assess the status of each family member, wonder what they are doing, and try to remember what I've got scheduled for the next day or the rest of the week. It's just time to myself with no interruption. I don't take my cellphone with me. It is a prescribed walk, prescribed by my doctor based on the assumption that "a body in motion tends to stay in motion."

But it wasn't anything moving that took my attention away from a mental review of my weekly schedule. About twenty yards away I saw what appeared to be a small bundle of fur nestled against the chain-link fence on the pasture side. It was right at the corner where the fence turns back toward pine woods on the outside of the fence with a field of grain on the inside of the fence.

The object was very small, dark tan with white spots. It lay motionless in the fading sunlight. As I walked slowly toward it I realized that it was a fawn, a baby deer resting in the quiet of the evening, probably where its mother had left it as she was grazing in the woods or, more likely, in the pasture.

But as I got closer to the fawn I noticed something else on the other side of the chain-link fence. It, too, was nestled against the fence, apparently dozing just as the little fawn was. It was resting prone on the ground, its back directly opposite the fawn. As I got closer I saw that *that something else* was a coyote.

This is where the first part of the contrast struck me. Coyotes are not beautiful animals. They look like dogs that would be shunned at a dog family reunion, part of the family but you don't really want to claim them.

But it wasn't the physical beauty, or lack thereof, that struck me as much as the fact that coyotes are predators and deer are their prey. Yet, here were two unsuited animals resting literally side-by-side in the peaceful dusk of the day.

Edward Hicks' folk painting, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, came to mind along with the verse that inspired the painting: "The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid . . ." Wasn't that a great example, right there in that field along the fence?

I didn't want to disturb the scene, so I turned around and left the two just as I had found them. As I walked back home, I began to rethink about the unlikely scene. Maybe I was romanticizing the whole thing too much. Maybe it was more illustrative of Robert Frost's poem that says, "Good fences make good neighbors"?

I like the peaceable kingdom theory better.

Bill Thompson is a speaker and author who lives just down the road, in nearby Hallsboro.

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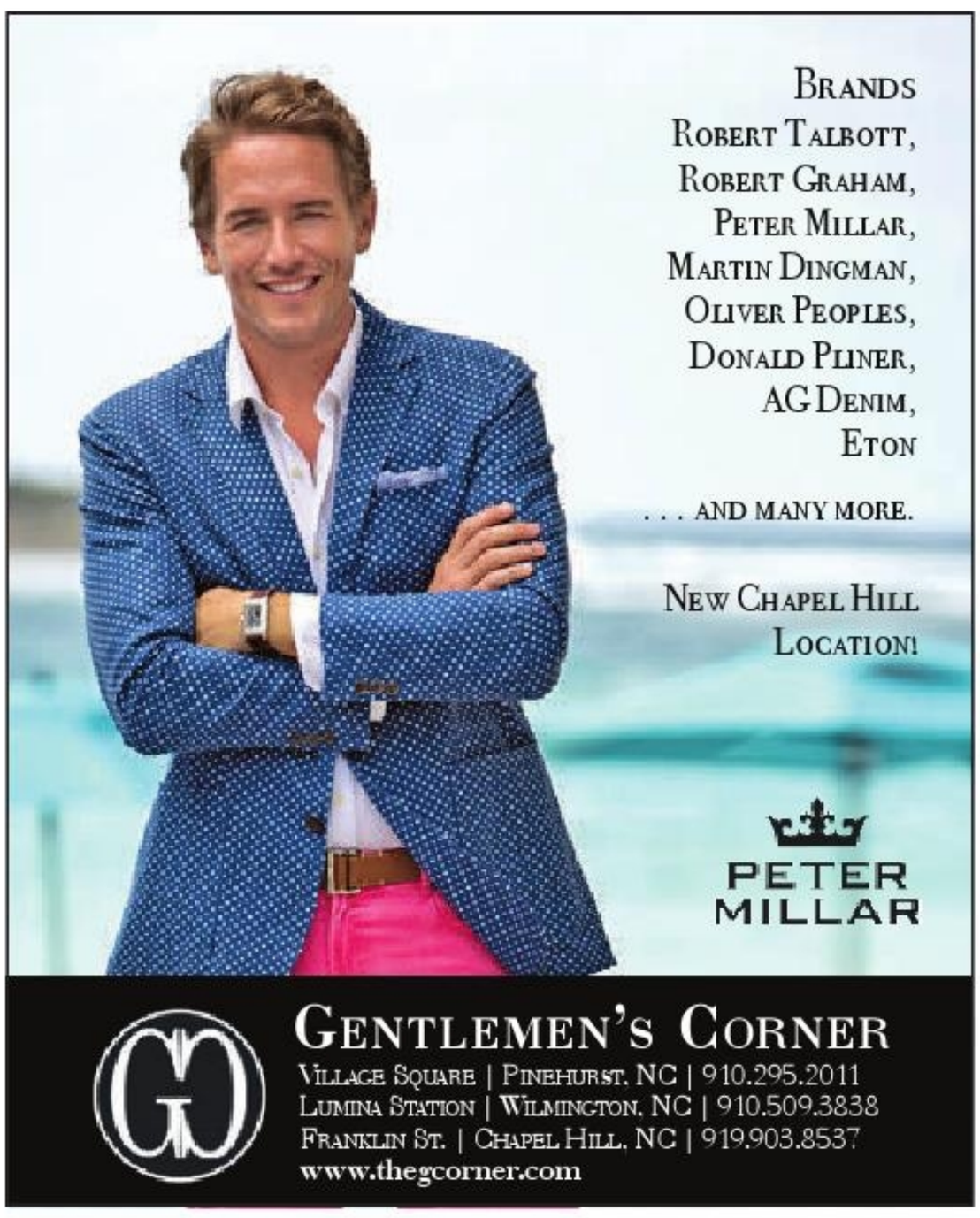

Brown Pelican

Built to soar, born to fish

By Susan Campbell

North Carolina's most recognizable beach bird is almost certainly the brown pelican. With its unique profile (namely its massive bill and pouch) and effortless flight style, brown pelicans are easy to spot throughout our coastal region, soaring just above the waves or loafing on piers, bridges or beaches. Although we have numerous gulls in the area, the pelican, with its long neck, expandable throat pouch and enormous wing span, is particularly adapted to marine life.

Pelicans feed mainly on small fish, which they scoop up with their large bills. Muscular contractions force the water from an individual's pouch, leaving a meal which is swallowed in short order. Typically the birds dive from a significant height and grab fish near the surface, often stunning the fish with their stout bodies. To protect their trachea and esophagus upon impact, the birds turn their heads ever-so-slightly to the left. Sometimes, groups of swimming birds herd, then scoop up schooling fish such as herring or mullet in shallow water. Pelicans will also go for other marine creatures such as shrimp, or scavenge fishermen's "leftovers" if the opportunity arises.

These huge birds, whose wing span can exceed six feet, seem to spend the majority of their time in the air gliding on long, broad wings, using updrafts from waves or stationary objects to gain lift. If the air currents are right, they can soar for hundreds of feet, flying just above the water's surface. When they do flap their wings, they use deep and powerful strokes.

Large birds require large nests. Built on mounds of seaweed and marsh grass, brown pelican nests are safer above the high tide line or areas that experience frequent overwash. The male gathers materials; the female fashions the nest. Two or three white eggs are laid and the parents take turns incubating them for close to a month. It will take another couple of months before the young can fly, and even then they will still be dependent on their parents for food. As a result of this long period of dependency, pelicans only raise one brood per year. If a nest is lost to a spring storm, however, a female may lay a second clutch.

Brown pelicans are extraordinarily resilient. Between the 1950s and '70s, these birds were virtually lost to pollution throughout their range in eastern North America. Their spectacular recovery is one of the biggest species protection success stories to date. Not only were some birds poisoned outright by pesticides (e.g., Aldrin), but DDT had a devastating effect on their breeding success (as a result of eggshell thinning). It was the horrific impact on pelicans that resulted in the banning of DDT and other highly toxic herbicides. Fortunately, the species rebounded quickly, recovering in less than two decades in most places. And thanks to coastal engineering projects, dredge spoil islands have created additional nesting habitat for these birds. As an obligate island nester, the species is very vulnerable to terrestrial predators. All of the small islands currently used by brown pelicans in our state are protected federal, state or privately owned properties.

But brown pelicans continue to remain vulnerable, so we must be vigilant when it comes to these majestic creatures. Not only can fishing line entangle them, but, given the proximity with which they feed and breed to shipping lanes, oiling of their plumage is a serious threat. Should you find an oiled or hooked bird, contact a local wildlife official immediately. Call the State Non-Game Wildlife Office at (919) 707-0060 or Wildlife Enforcement Communications at (919) 707-0040 to obtain the name and telephone number of a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in your area.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. She can be contacted by email at susan@ncaves.com, or by calling (910) 949-3207.

Susie in the Shallows

Sharing your life with a dog means a lifetime commitment – and a joy that deepens every year

By Virginia Holman

"There are a few things you girls need to know about life," my father used to say. "Rule number one: There's no such thing as a free lunch. Rule number two: You ain't getting out of this alive. Rule number three: Never own a dog."

When these rules were invoked, my sister and I knew what my father meant. He wanted us to understand the meaning of a quid pro quo exchange. He was explaining that lives are made small by too little risk, yet cut short by foolhardiness. And he made sure we knew that a dog was never, ever, a possession. Sharing one's life with a dog, he insisted, meant lifelong commitment.

I've been thinking about rule number three quite a lot lately. Our dog, Susie, is now 13 years old. I retrieved her from the animal shelter when my son was 6. I'd actually selected another puppy first, a slack, dopey little golden/Lab mix, but between the time I'd cruised the cages and requested puppy number one — a span of all of ten minutes — my first choice had been euthanized.

In most social settings I tend to be a profoundly reserved, understated person, to the point that people sometimes perceive me as rude or snobbish rather than just shy, but in that moment I forgot myself. I was transformed into a woman enraged. I informed the woman at the desk that there had been a mistake, and I sprinted back inside the kennel area to puppy one's vacant cement and chain-link cage. I then ran to Susie's kennel and jotted her kennel number. When I gave the woman Susie's number, I started to quake and sputter, the heat rising in my face until I realized I was both crying and speaking quite loudly. She told me, not unkindly, that Susie was scheduled

PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

to be put down the following day.

"I will be back in five hours with my husband and son," I told her. "Do NOT kill this dog." I think I may have added a punitive, "Do you hear me?" I do recall that my eyes involuntarily narrowed, and that I pointed my finger. I apologized. I told her I knew she was just doing her job. I chanted: *I'm sorry, I'm sorry*, aloud, until I made it back home.

My husband knew I was visiting the shelter that day, and before the visit we'd agreed that once I saw a suitable puppy, he'd come meet it the following day. Then, together, we could introduce it to our son. Now the clock was ticking, and I understood this protocol would not do. I picked my son up at noon from kindergarten, and told him we were going to look at a puppy, which resulted in a reaction of glee, because every child knows you only look at a pet you are going to adopt.

Only then did I call my husband to ask if he could meet us at the shelter late that afternoon.

"Yeeeess," he said in an admirably measured tone. I thought I detected a sigh. Then, after a pause, and with a hint of amusement, he asked, "Have you named it yet?"

When she was a puppy, Susie looked like a plush child's toy. She weighed about three pounds and looked like a miniature fox with a curly tail. Her stubby little legs would give out after less than a quarter mile, so my son carried her along our route for much of the time. People stopped us everywhere we went. *What kind of dog is that? She's so cute! We love your dog.* We ate it up.

Susie ate it up. She stopped on cue when we passed people on our walks as if to say, *Praise me. I'm adorable*. As she grew we tried to train her, but, and I say this with great love, Susie is not a smart dog in the way that dogs are considered smart. She doesn't respond to voice commands. She doesn't herd anything. She won't rescue you from the bottom of a pile of rubble. She also has short term memory problems. She doesn't seem to recall that she's ever gone out the back door before, even though she goes out the back door at least four times a day. My husband and I must nudge her along the path to the door, and she'll look at us with confusion. *I'm going where?* she says with her eyes. *I'm going why?* Fortunately, she is a splendid-looking animal, despite her alarming two-inch overbite, with a sweet and gentle nature. In short, she's been getting by on her looks for years.

At 13, the clock is ticking louder. She has good days, and not so good days. She sleeps a lot, and deeply. Her hearing is dim, and her bright brown eyes have begun to cloud a bit. She's had several expensive surgeries to fix infections caused by her malformed jaw. She has enough teeth left to chew her food. I pause at the stairs so she can steady herself and climb them on her own.

On her good days, I load Susie into the truck and we cruise to her favorite spots. She loves heading to Fort Fisher, especially the twisty section of 421 before the ferry terminal. I'll sometimes pull the truck over to take photos of birds. Susie ignores the birds, but her body goes taut and trembles, her ears prick up, and she lets out a low steady growl when deer emerge from the brush. She'll stick her little black nose out the window and sniff and chuff, and yet oddly, she'll never bark at the deer. If a dog passes us, however, more often than not, she'll go berserk.

She loves walking along "the rocks," and is invigorated by the cool wind in her hair. Sometimes we run into one of the local tow truck owners, Mr. "Fossil" Gunter, and Susie will smile and beg for attention while I catch up on local gossip and old-time fishing tips.

I'll walk her on the beach near the Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. She'll dip her paws in the water but hurry away from the surf. I think now that her "boy," our son, is off to college, she misses his kid energy. Luckily, there are usually lots of families here, and there's always some child who asks what kind of dog she is, and if she's friendly, and if he can pet her.

When the days are long and sultry, we take her out early in the morning or in the evening. She won't go far in the heat, but she loves the calm little sandbar on the river at Carolina Beach State Park. She'll venture into the water up to her chest, stretch her hind legs behind her, and let out a long sigh.

If she looks like she's staying awhile, I'll climb into the shallows with her, and we'll watch the sky flame pink and purple at sunset.

When she was younger, I'd bring her here and she'd try to snap up the mullet as they flipped out of the water. Now, I wonder if she can hear or see them. I look out across the water with her, to try to see exactly what she sees. Sometimes, I'll stand and tell her it's time to go, and she'll hunker down, her little body refusing to be moved from this spot. She seems to be saying, *Really, human, what's the hurry?* So I'll sit and wait with her, both of us staring at the far shore, until she decides that she's ready to go home.

Author Virginia Holman teaches in the Creative Writing Department at UNC Wilmington. She is also ACA certified Level 3 Coastal Kayak Instructor and guides part time with Kayak Carolina.

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She holds her hands above the urn on the table
like hands over a fire to warm them.
The ashes of a dearly departed terrier
speak to her from the grave,
"I am here doing fine. I love you.
What a great master you were. There are
others here I know. The gerbil who belonged
to the little boy downstairs. The orange alley
cat I used to bark at, that got run over
by the garbage truck; the one we saw mangled
by the curb on the way to the vet. Even the
neighbor's parrot, that big green and yellow one
you hated so much. I remember how you laughed
at the droppings on the old lady's shoulder.
There are lots of other dogs here, too. I've been
talking with the ones that have been put down.
They say it's like falling to sleep, then you wake up
here. It's kind of blurry at first, then you realize
there are no people, just other animals. And there's
plenty of food and sunshine. Nobody bothers
anybody else. I even saw a lion lying with a lamb.
Don't worry about me. I have to go."
Her client trembles, pulls several tissues from a box
on her lap, pats her eyes gently, and wipes her nose,
clearing her voice and softly thanking her
for this glimpse from the other side.
The pet psychic says, "You're welcome. I take cash
and personal checks."

— Jonathan K. Rice

Pup & Circumstance

A brilliantly innovative program matches unwanted dogs with prison trainers. The results are life-changing

By Nan Graham · Photographs by Dick Parrott

The ceremony begins. Everyone stands to the familiar strains of "Pomp and Circumstance." All the usual elements are here: proud families restless for the program to begin; the solemn processional with graduates in traditional mortarboards walking slowly, with dignity, down the aisle; cameras flashing to capture the life-changing moment forever.

It is easy to mentally assign possible senior superlatives to each graduate: the Class Clown (the impish lopsided grin is a dead giveaway), the Jock (muscular chest and a bit of a swagger in his step), the Class Beauty (a visual standout from the rest), the Gawky Miss (all legs) and the Underdog (smaller than the others, but with a definite Little Guy attitude).

The graduates look happy, as do their families. The five graduating dogs stand obediently by their prison trainers, some with their miniature mortarboards slightly askew for the graduation portraits. The

mortarboard is a poor fit for Guinness, the dachshund in the group. Instead, he sports bouncing shamrocks on springs, sparkling with green glitter attached to his harness. The canines' prison trainers beam with parental pride. But when it comes time to hand the leash over to the adoptive families, the pain of separation is palatable. Photographer Dick Parrott, who has photographed every graduation since the program's inception, says you can always tell when a trainer begins to get emotional about parting from his dog. "Their Adam's apple starts to bob as they choke up over the separation," he says. "Some trainers look away or stare at their shoes to mask their feelings."

How did all this come about? The founder of Monty's Home, Barbara Raab, has a mission: to save abandoned throw-away dogs from the kill shelter in Pender County and orchestrate a mega-makeover like no other. She is a transplant from New York state and a certified professional dog trainer with two decades of experience. She is passionate about this rescue and rehabilitation program for shelter dogs: the Pawsitive Partners Prison Program. Monty's Home is the community partner for the prison program and provides all its funding through donations.

The initial step is selecting the right dogs for training. The thorough selection process covers almost twenty behavioral tests, examining each dog's general disposition and demeanor, how he plays with others (including children and other dogs and cats), whether he exhibits territorial behavior about his food and toys, and takes note of any fears and shyness.

It started for this particular class on Saint Paddy's Day, March 17, 2014. That explains the dogs' Irish names: Shamrock, Clover, Seamus, Guinness and Fiona. A sad lot they were in the shelter: scrawny, frightened, bedraggled, filthy and flea-infested creatures. But the escape from almost certain euthanasia was a rescue like none other.

The lucky quintet of dogs (there are five kennel spaces available at Pender Correctional Institution) is chosen for their next evaluation. Next, a trip to the vet for a couple of days for further observation and assessment. The candidates then head to the Pender Correctional Institution, where they live and undergo intensive training with inmate handlers for eight weeks, every day for five hours. With training, grooming, medical checkup and treatment if necessary, and a newfound self-esteem, these "Luck of the Irish" grads are in the sixth year of this program. It was the first prisoner/dog program in the Southeastern part of North Carolina to train dogs for family adoption.

The trainers are chosen as carefully as the trainees. And again, it's about temperament. Many are seasoned trainers who have worked in the program before, but there is lots of competition for this coveted job. Requirements:

No incident of rape or animal abuse on their record, must be physically capable of handling the dog, and a minimum seventh-grade education. The dogs are matched with the prisoners according to need and experience. The most behaviorally challenged dog gets the most experienced trainer. Cola, from the previous class, had been returned to the shelter three times. A hopeless case, some said. But Tony, who has been in the program for three years, took on the repeat offender, and now Cola has a forever home.

It is love at first sight for some of the trainers when they meet their pupils. "I took one look at that face and knew we were good," one trainer said. Many carry photos of their past charges in their wallets and flash them as proudly as any father.

The schedule for dog and man is exact: Each dog's trainer hand-feeds its meals to build trust, behavioral training every single day for two hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. And that last-call potty walk at 10 p.m. before lights out. Five hours daily, seven days a week.

The training is specific and somewhat unusual. The animals are never reprimanded or punished. No negative training. The closest the dogs come to "no" is "uh-oh." Positive reinforcement is key in this unorthodox approach to turning these dogs into companions and members of a human family. A "Good dog!" "Good sit!" for praise. A doggie treat to nurture that bond of trust, and loyalty. Lessons learned: patience and developing observation for the inmate and for the dog . . . obedience and good manners.

Howard said his pupil taught him. "Guinness always lets you know his needs," he said, grinning.

Previous prison dog classes have been given names borrowed from pop culture groups: Little Rascals, Gilligan's Island, Peanuts, Bandits, Andy Griffith, Woodstock, Happy Days, and, my favorite, Soda Pop. So along with Bonnie and Clyde . . . Fonzie, Ginger, Alfalfa, Linus, Aunt Bee, Pepsi and Mr. Pibb. Nameless when they left the kill shelter, they leave the prison with unique names which will forever stamp them as part of their training group — unless a new owner decides that Fido better suits the new pet than Fiona!

This graduation is a true commencement, a new beginning for the strays and lost dogs and their remarkable trainers. This project, which began with a focus on dogs on death row, has blossomed to include the inmate trainers and the wider community. Incidents of violence and behavioral problems in the correctional institution are down, morale of the staff and prison personnel is high, adoptive families have a new companion pet.

And why should you support Monty's Home? They are the folks responsible for the entire funding of this remarkable prison training program. In the past two years, they have expanded into New Hanover County and added a second prison to the program. Monty's Home depends wholly on donations to support this rescue program. And the results of their efforts are astounding.

100 percent Rescue from Kill Shelter! Every dog comes directly from the shelter.

100 percent Adoption Rate! Every graduate is adopted and never returned to the shelter.

100 percent Volunteer! No salaries. Every penny you give goes directly to rescue effort.

100 percent Tax Deductible! Non-profit since 2007.

100 percent Confidence! Monty's Home is here for the family for the lifetime of their dogs.

For the adoption fee of $300, families get a well-trained dog, fully vaccinated, spayed or neutered; a week's supply of the same food your pup has been eating for the past eight weeks; leash, collar, training harness; crate, toys, training DVD, canvas tote and a mug to put on your desk at work. All told, that's over $1,000 worth of services and goods . . . not a bad return on your investment.

But the real return is that you will become part of the solution, part of a real game-changer for man and dog. A dog with no future has a new family. A man behind bars learns dog handling skills and may have an occupation when released. Both are no longer lost.

Barbara Raab says, " I love what I do. But I couldn't do it without the army of dedicated volunteers who are really the backbone of this organization. Everybody was put on this planet to do a job. I think this is mine." I couldn't agree more.

At a graduation a few years back, one prison trainer summed up his experience as he spoke to the audience. "They say we gave these dogs a second chance," he said looking down at his dog. "Actually . . . we're the ones who got a second chance."

To learn more about Monty's Home, visit www.montyshome.org

Nan Graham is a frequent contributor to Salt *magazine, and one doggone talented lady.*

Life Made Whole

Six stories of rescued love

By Jason Frye · Photographs by Brownie Harris

Dogs are not our whole life,
but they make our lives whole.
— Roger A. Caras

In the photograph, I am 3, maybe 4. A silver cap pistol half as long as my leg hangs from a gun belt cinched tightly around my waist. The buckle has a silver horse on it. I'm staring straight into the camera, strumming my guitar, my flat-crowned hat tilted back just so, about as rakishly as a toddler can muster. My dog, Gretchen, a miniature collie we rescued from a kill shelter a year earlier, sits beside me, looking out of the frame.

This is my wife's favorite picture of me. *Something about a boy and his dog,* she says.

A few months after my mom snaps the picture, Gretchen will go hunting and stay gone for days. I'll be distraught. My dad will find her, foreleg caught in a fox trap. He'll carry her home. Emaciated and limping, she'll come to me and lick my face even though the wound in her leg goes to the bone. Tomorrow the leg will be amputated and my dog will be one shy of a set.

Like any bonded canine and human pair, Gretchen and I were inseparable. My family gave her a good life, but she gave more in companionship and unquestioning love than we could have ever imagined.

Bridgett Rowley feels the same way about her dog, Scarlett O'Hara. Scarlett was rescued from a puppy mill bust in Brunswick County a couple of years ago. The dogs rescued alongside Scarlett lived in appalling conditions: Dogs packed five, even ten to a cage; those outside sat exposed to sun, wind and rain; those inside lived with the stench of their own leavings; malnutrition and overzealous breeding left the mothers sickly and their pups diseased and deformed.

Worst of all, what the owners of this puppy mill (one of several busted in our region in the recent past) were doing is not illegal. Sure, there are animal cruelty charges, but the penalties are minor, little more than fines and a slap on the wrist.

When a friend asked Rowley to donate some food to the puppy mill dogs, she decided it was time to adopt, met Scarlett, and fell in love.

"Once I got Scarlett home, it took her a while to sit with me and not shy away from my touch. I was heartbroken by this dog, so I started researching puppy mills to see what I could do. I needed to know for Scarlett," says Rowley.

What she found appalled her. With no guidelines or laws on the books pertaining to puppy mills, there was no end in sight. Rowley organized Canines and Couture, "a cute, sassy event to help people learn about puppy mills and effective legislation." In 2013, she held her first event and began to spread the word. In May 2014, Canines and Couture was back with another fashion show and word about a new bill — HB 930 — that would establish standards for commercial dog breeders. More than 200 people lined the runway and clapped for the dogs as they strutted their stuff. Most of the dogs were rescues, and several were rescues from puppy mill busts in the region.

I went and met many of the dogs, giving pets and pats and rubs, and receiving licks, gnaws and friendly yips all the while.

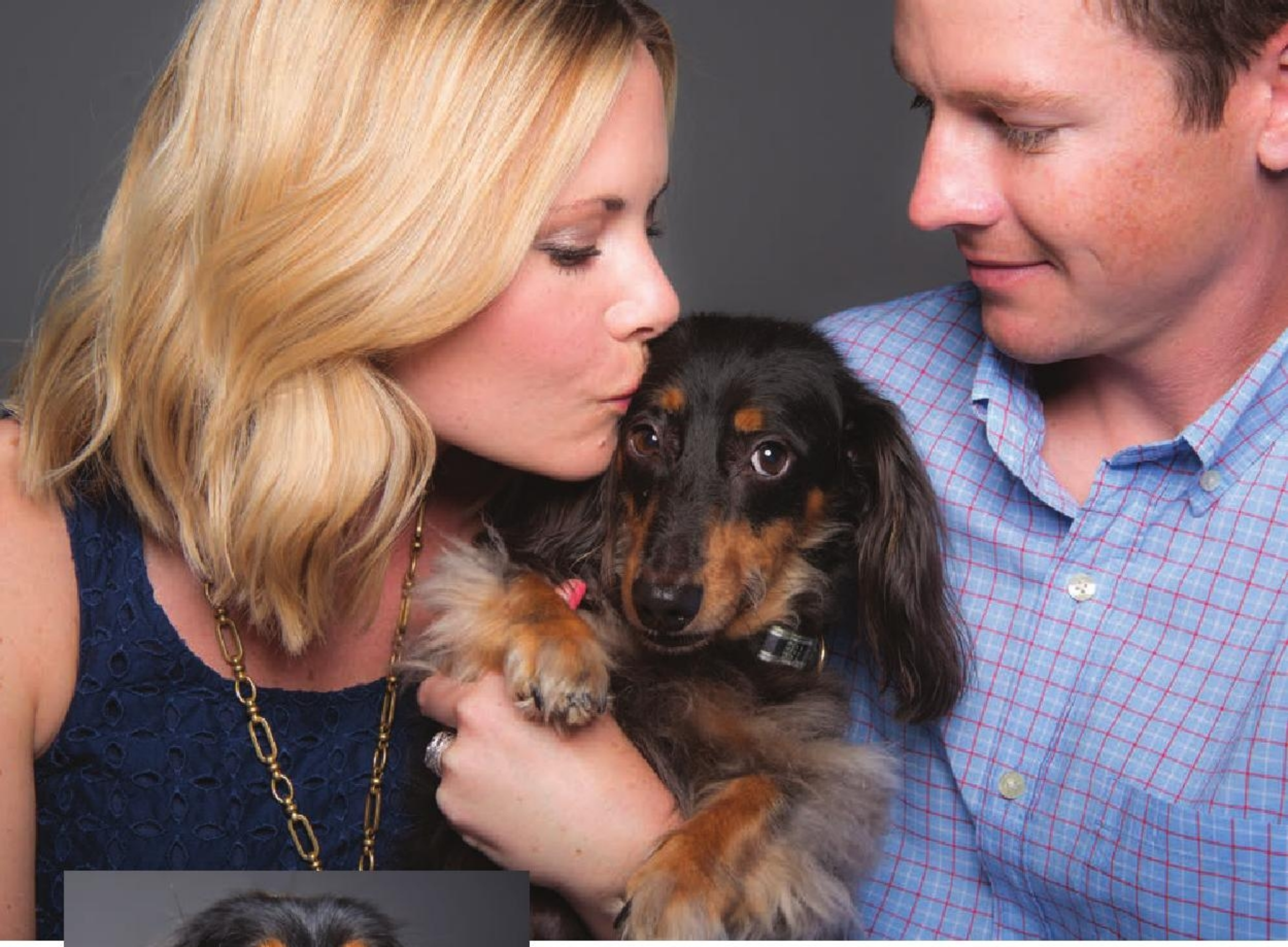
Scarlett O'Hara

Bridgett Rowley adopted Scarlett O'Hara, a Maltese/Shih-Tzu mix, two years ago from a puppy mill bust in Brunswick County. Her life began in an outdoor cage where she and her littermates endured harsh sun and rain, unprotected. She lived there for six months, never once walking on grass or interacting with humans, save for sporadic feedings.

"When I met Scarlett, you could see it in her eyes — her soul was broken. She'd been neglected and ignored and she didn't know how to act around people. With rescues like her, you have to be patient."

And Bridgett was, taking her time to get Scarlett accustomed to being petted (cuddling took a little longer — a year, to be exact — but now Bridgett reports that Scarlett is both a cuddler and bed sleeper) and introducing her to the world. Raised in a cage, Scarlett knew nothing beyond its walls: She'd never walked on grass, chased a squirrel or seen a tree.

Scarlett still holds a few habits left over from her early days — she devours her food as quickly as possible, and at times she's shy — but her new life is a breeze. She has every toy in the world, but her favorite is an old sock (of course). She sleeps with Bridgett. She has her own wardrobe. She goes on long walks. And now there's life dancing in her little brown eyes.



Pippin

Pippin, a 5-year-old miniature long-haired dachshund, joined the family of Chris and Kaylie Soule when he was 4 months old, and he hasn't looked back. Abandoned at the dog pound when he was 10 weeks old, the Dachshund Rescue of North America scooped him up, and that's where the Soules found him.

"We weren't in the market for a new dog, but when I stumbled onto a picture of Pippin, I fell in love with him. He was silly looking and had a bad back ankle, but I knew he was supposed to be mine," says Kaylie Soule.

When he arrived at his new home, he was quite the hit, bonding quickly with the Soules and their other dachshund puppy, Duncan. Now, "spoiled is Pippin's middle name!" says Kaylie. He refuses to go downstairs on his own, insisting instead on being carried down. He finds his way onto your lap no matter what. He wakes up Chris and Kaylie for a midnight drink of water by wagging his tail in their faces. And his penchant for late-night snacks sees him follow Chris to the pantry for the hopes of a bite or two of Chris' nightly bowl of cereal.

Pippin spends his days lazing in the sun, rolling in the grass and generally living his dog life to the fullest.

"There's nothing that makes me happier than seeing a rescue dog find his 'forever' home," says Kaylie.

Beast

When a dog is named Beast, you know he's either tiny or huge. In *this* Beast's case, he's enormous. A beautiful great Dane with a massive head and friendly disposition, Beast has lived with Jacqueline and Doug Carroll since he was 8 weeks old, and in the last four years, the Carrolls have managed to spoil their dog rotten.

Beast came into their life after their first great Dane, Mako, died in 2010. They heard word of a litter of rescued great Dane puppies up for adoption by a veterinary student in Georgia and reached out to her. They instantly fell for Beast, whose markings matched those of their lost Dane. A few weeks later, Beast joined the family.

Beast snores and he's huge, so unlike his smaller cousins, he's not allowed on the bed. "Just his front paws and belly, his hind feet have to stay on the floor," Jacqueline says. But there is a time when he gets to share a bed with his humans — movie night. Then, the Carrolls will blow up an air mattress in the living room just so Beast can climb up and lie with them.

He's a beach dog and loves running through the sand and reeds, but one of his favorite spots is on a plush lawn where he'll roll and lie belly-up, sunning himself and relaxing as only a dog can.

Beast does get jealous, though. When you stop petting him, he paws you to say he hasn't had enough. And if you pick up either Macaroni or Cheese, his rescue kitty brothers, he'll do his best lapdog impression and try to climb aboard.

Nugget

Danielle Lutz and her boyfriend, Josh Thaxton, belong to Nugget, a 4-year-old pit bull/boxer mix, and his brothers, Spike and Lennox. I say they belong to him because one look at his face — those black ears and that black patch over one eye — and you're all his.

Nugget came into Danielle and Josh's life through Craigslist. He lived with a family who had too many pets and too small a house, and Danielle thought hers would be the perfect permanent home for Nugget. They brought their other dogs to meet Nugget and it went swimmingly; they took him home that day.

Like every dog at the beach, Nugget is a beach dog if ever there was one. He loves to swim, chase his ball, frolic with kids and adults alike, and sun himself in the sand. When he's not enjoying the beach life, he's pulling a skateboard; crunching ice cubes; riding in the car, head out, tongue lolling; or sleeping upside down. But most of all he enjoys people. Nugget's a therapy dog with Canines for Service, something that Danielle is very grateful for.

"Nugget has a lot of love to give, and I'm glad to be able to share his love of life with the community," she says.

Gibson

Gibson Guitars inspired the name of Billie Harting and Jon Bibb's dog, Gibson. This 3-year-old Lab and pit mix was adopted at 4 months, rescued from the Columbus County Humane Society.

"We knew we wanted a black dog, and when we saw Gibson, we knew he was the one," says Harting.

One look in his loving eyes and it's easy to see why. With such a face, you'd think that this dog rules the roost, but not so. Eddie Money, his feline brother, gives him a run for his money at home, and, most surprisingly, Gibson's not fond of his humans' bed.

"He prefers his dog bed to our bed," says Harting. "He actually won't let us in his bed."

My Walk With Hilda

How a downtown dog charmed her way back to the bookshop

By Gwenyfar Rohler · Photographs by Erin Pike

With flaming red hair and bright blue eyes, Hilda Rumpole is a beauty and a natural-born flirt. She is used to getting her way. Currently, she is trying to convince me to bring her to work with me again.

When Hilda was a tiny puppy consisting of a pudgy tummy, lots of fluff and big, manipulative eyes, she was a daily attraction at the bookstore. But the day that she scaled the walls of ye olde pack-n-play was the last day she would spend in the book-dealing business for quite a while. She was too rambunctious. I feared a small child getting knocked down on the vintage tile floor and injuring himself. So home she stayed, curled up on the settee beside the home bookshelf, dreaming of stardom.

Two years later, Hilda is making noises about coming back to work with me. She swears she will be good, and quiet, and well-behaved. *Yeah, right*, I say to her. *Your idea of minding is to walk away while I'm talking.* At this, of course, she turns her pouty blue eyes toward me, asking innocently, *Who, me?* Hilda argues like a teenager. She refuses to engage with arguments that follow logic. Instead, she just shifts the conversation around until she gets what she wants. For days she has followed me around the house with a constant stream of pleas for her return to work, aka, stardom. Yesterday morning on my way out she met me at the door with her rope bone in her mouth, all packed and ready to come with me.

Sigh.

She can be rather convincing. *Not only am I well-behaved*, Hilda tells me, *but Downtown is very dog-friendly. Many dogs regularly go to work with their people.* Then the kicker: *You say Old Books is a dog-friendly business – so you let in other dogs, but not me? Not your own?*

Ouch.

After much back and forth, I finally compromised: "We can take a tour of Downtown and its dog-friendliness," I told her. "After that, we'll see. I'm not making any promises." Hilda pirouettes with joy. She is certain she has won not only the battle, but the war.

The quid pro quo for this adventure was a b-a-t-h.

Hmm . . . but you promise it will be followed by a w-a-l-k? Hilda clarified. It's tough when your dog learns to spell. I guess we are going to have to start discussing these things in French. With the walk confirmed, Hilda trotted into Von Barkee's Dog Spa and Bakery for a beauty day.

"Hilda!" Nikki Beall called from behind the counter. "Would you like a treat?"

I retreated to the bookstore to confer with the staff about Hilda's request. "I guess I won't wear grape lip gloss to work anymore," Susan laughed. Hilda loves the grape-flavored lip gloss and will climb Susan to lick it from her face. No one else raised any serious objections, and I realized that I would not be getting much backup on this issue from my staff if I took a hard line on this. Thanks a lot, guys.

Back at Von Barkee's: "I couldn't resist giving her a feather extension," Nikki cooed, fingering the green and purple feathers behind Hilda's left ear. "She was so good."

Nikki let Hilda pick out a treat as a reward for her good behavior. *She has everyone snowed*, I thought.

First stop on our w-a-l-k was to see Tim Corcoran at Doggie by Nature in the Cotton Exchange. Hilda's tail went wild when she recognized Tim from obedience school. "Well, I'm glad you remembered something from class," I grumbled at her sarcastically. "Where's Stella?" I asked after Hilda's former classmate.

"She's at home today," Tim replied. Hilda carefully inspected every inch of the store and eventually picked out a teal seahorse rope toy. "Is this the one you want?" I asked. She took it from my hand and trotted toward the door. "I guess that's the one we are getting," I grinned at Tim.

Out in the courtyard of the Cotton Exchange we sat at a table to enjoy some ice cream from The Scoop. Hilda loves ice cream — *loves* it, though she hinted she would rather have one of their chili-cheese hot dogs. Jeff Pollack brought Hilda a scoop of vanilla ice cream, and we took a moment to discuss how a simple walk had gone so far. I can tell Hilda is quite pleased with herself and is certain that I am on the cusp of agreeing to her renewed tenure at the bookstore.

"If we are going on a w-a-l-k, then I get to have a cup of coffee. I don't have the kind of energy you do," I say to little Miss H. We head out the courtyard to Java Dog, the hub of dog-friendly coffee houses. I get a small coffee for myself and a biscotti for Hilda. Back outside on the white plastic chairs, birds peck at the biscotti crumbs she leaves behind and I have to admit she is being very restrained by not chasing them. "You're a good girl," I say and stroke her soft silky fur. "You are."

Hilda asks: *Where is Meg Dog?* I haven't told her yet that owner Paul Brown's beloved chocolate Lab has passed on. Meg was really

the reason Java Dog became a dog hub: Paul started bringing his puppy to work, so the customers brought their dogs, too.

We stop at the bookstore to let Hilda say hello and drop off her toys and treats for later. "Hilda! Oh, hello!" Susan greets her. "Have you come to make out with me?"

I'll give Susan this: She has figured out that the way to the boss's heart is through the dog.

Back on Front Street, headed south, Hilda inspects a fire hydrant. Progress is slow because trashcans are particularly fascinating to her. "You see an entirely different world out here than I do, don't you?" I ask her. She gives me a pitying look and resumes her careful sniffing.

At Planet, Hilda is thrilled to greet Patricia. I try to keep her long, beautiful tail from knocking over all the displays. Then my prima donna surprises me by picking out a gift for her brother, Horace. It's a sticker that says, "I love bacon." While I am paying for her purchase, Hilda charms another treat from the staff.

"How about a drink?" I ask her. "It's a warm day. Do you think we could drop by Duck and Dive?" She agrees distractedly. Misha's dog, of Slainte Irish Pub, is across the street. But he is busy visiting with another canine friend and ignores her. Hilda is not used to being ignored. Her consolation comes from a husky lying on the cool, dusky floor of Duck and Dive. He gives her the once-over as we order drinks.

Sitting in the sunshine outside, she asks me if we are going to go to Lula's. I tell her that they won't open for another couple of hours, so probably not on this trip. Hilda has heard some friends talking about hanging out on the smoking deck of the iconic locals' bar and has been dropping hints about giving it a try. We were planning to have dinner downtown together, but she has worn herself out from the excitement.

On our walk back to the bookstore, she starts pestering me again about how things went and wants to know when she can come back to work with me. I sigh, and admit I'm beaten. She's talked me into it. I agree to try it out a few weekday mornings in the fall. *Why do I have to wait for the fall?* She demands. Because you are going to have to walk to work with me, and in the summer it is too hot for you to go more than a block.

You won't carry me?

I look at her nearly fifty pounds of long red fur and envision walking fourteen blocks in the blistering July heat with her in my arms. If it were an emergency, yes. But not every day. Both ways. Uphill. In the heat.

After a pause to consider the options, Hilda wags her tail and licks my face to congratulate me on making the right decision. Come fall, she will be packed and ready to go.

Hilda's Index of Downtown:

Number of bag stations downtown for doggie business: six.

Bag station locations: Bijou Park, Claude Howell Park, Water Street & Mutter's Alley, Riverfront Park, Bailey Theatre Park, Ann & Water Streets at Chandler's Wharf.

Favorite drinking fountain downtown: The one in front of the federal courthouse at Riverfront Park. *It has a dog fountain, too!*

Dog-friendly spaces downtown include: The Cotton Exchange, Planet LLC, City Market, The Black Cat Shoppe (*In spite of its name, it's still dog friendly!*), Occasions . . . Just Write, Edge of Urge, The Transplanted Garden, Nerdvana Comix, Old Books on Front Street, and more on a case-by-case basis.

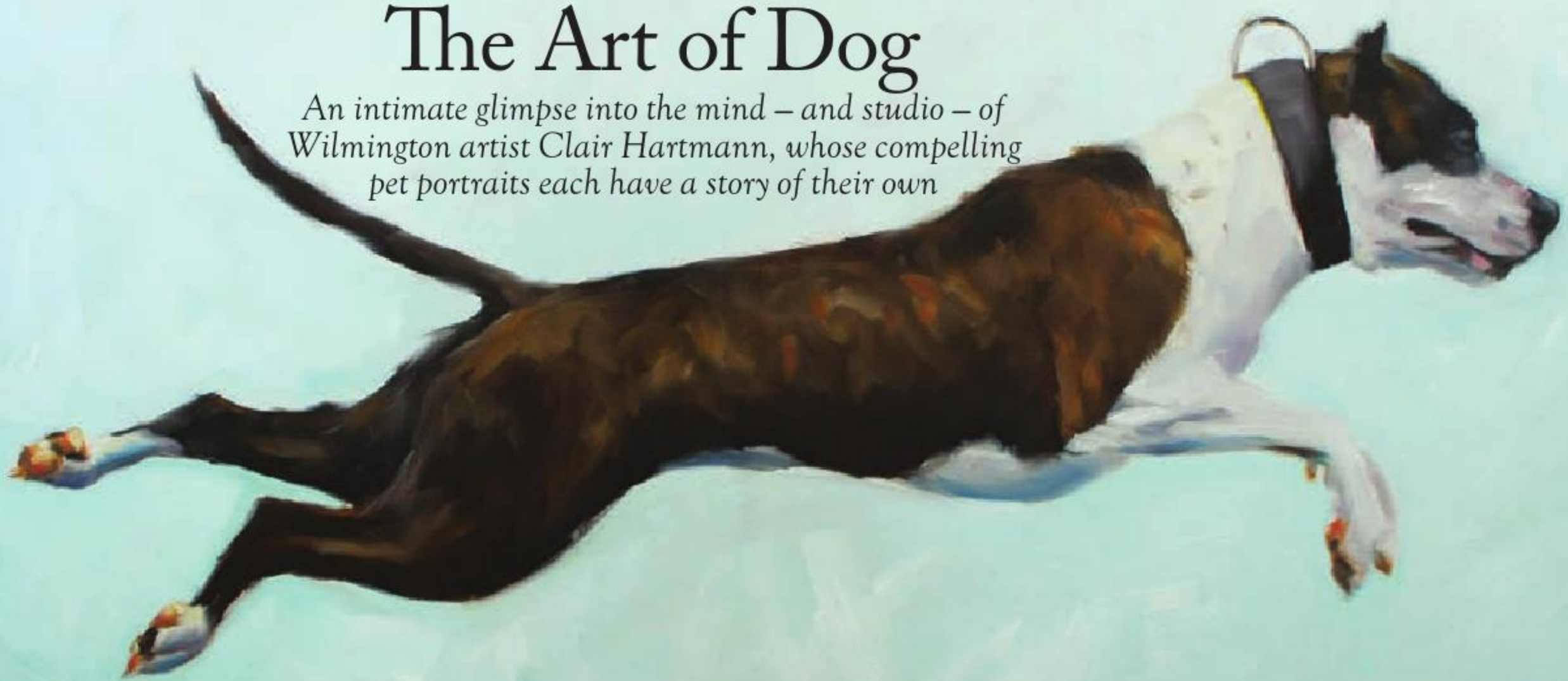
Dog-friendly restaurants include: Elijah's, The Pilot House, The George, Fat Tony's, Front Street Brewery, The Basics, Chop's Deli and The Scoop (*but only on the outside patio*).

Dog-friendly bars include: The Cellar, Botega, The Brown Coat Pub, Duck and Dive, and Slainte (*although some of these places may insist that you sit at the smoking patio area*).

Hilda's advice about antique stores: *Not made for people with really great tails. Let the canine sniff the trashcan outside while you look at the breakables.*

The Art of Dog

An intimate glimpse into the mind – and studio – of Wilmington artist Clair Hartmann, whose compelling pet portraits each have a story of their own



"Rocket Dog"

Last year, when Hartmann attended a canine aquatics competition at the Battleship, she saw this mighty athlete participating in an event best described as a doggy long jump straight into the water. "I loved his collar," says the artist. "He looked like a carousal dog."

"Miss Lilly"

"People are freaks about dachshunds," says the artist. "They just love them. I get more hits on this picture than any other painting I've done."

"King Martin"

The magic of this mixed media painting, says Hartmann, is that it sparks the imagination. The woman who owns this painting has created an entire storyline for the dachshund and barn swallow, says the artist. "There is a fairytale aspect to it."

"Obsession"

"If he sees a fishing pole, he starts shaking with excitement," says Hartmann of Chumley, the aging Jack Russell whom she rescued from a busy highway in Florida seven years ago. "Whoever owned him before me must have been a fisherman." Here, Chumley watches koi at the Arboretum, one of his favorite pastimes.

"Comfort Zone"

"I've always loved sleeping dogs," says Hartmann, whose childhood Dalmatian, Ginny, was the dozing model in her earliest pet portraits. Like Chumley (left), Ginny, too, was obsessed with fish.

"Bella"

"Painting is kind of like a signature," says Hartmann. For this portrait, says the artist, the brush strokes were effortless.

Hartmann's dogs, Chumley and Frida, don't always get along. So when she happened to catch them in this brief, intimate moment, she snapped a photograph for the portrait. "To me, it's a metaphor for relationships," says Hartmann. "It's not just a painting of two dogs."

Hartmann, whose own pup, Frida, is a mixed-breed, says the title of this piece has caused unexpected controversy. She wan't trying to be offensive. "I think mutts are beautiful."

Snoopy was on a "lost dog" poster in the UK. "I don't know if she was ever found," says Hartmann, who admits this portrait makes her choke up. "She reminds me of my dogs. What if [Chumley or Frida] were lost, and they ended up in the wrong place?"

While searching Etsy, Hartmann stumbled upon a photograph of a Boston terrier modeling a handmade dog collar. "I asked the artist if I could paint him and she said 'yes'," says Hartmann.

When Hartmann uses a photo from a pet rescue organization for one of her portraits, thirty-five percent of the proceeds from the sale are donated to the organization. Murphy was one of the lucky ones, says Hartmann. "He got adopted."

As with the portrait of Bella (page 53), the painting of Tumbles seemed to materialize before her eyes. "I wanted to keep painting, but it was done."

"Every dog does this," says Hartmann. "They know that when you're putting on your socks, you're going somewhere." Dakota is letting local writer/mixologist Joel Finsel know that she's ready to go, too. When Finsel's wife, Jess James, posted this photo on Instagram, Hartmann found her next subject.

STORY OF A HOUSE

Camellia Cottage

At home with a great dog named Sparky and a friendly artistic spirit

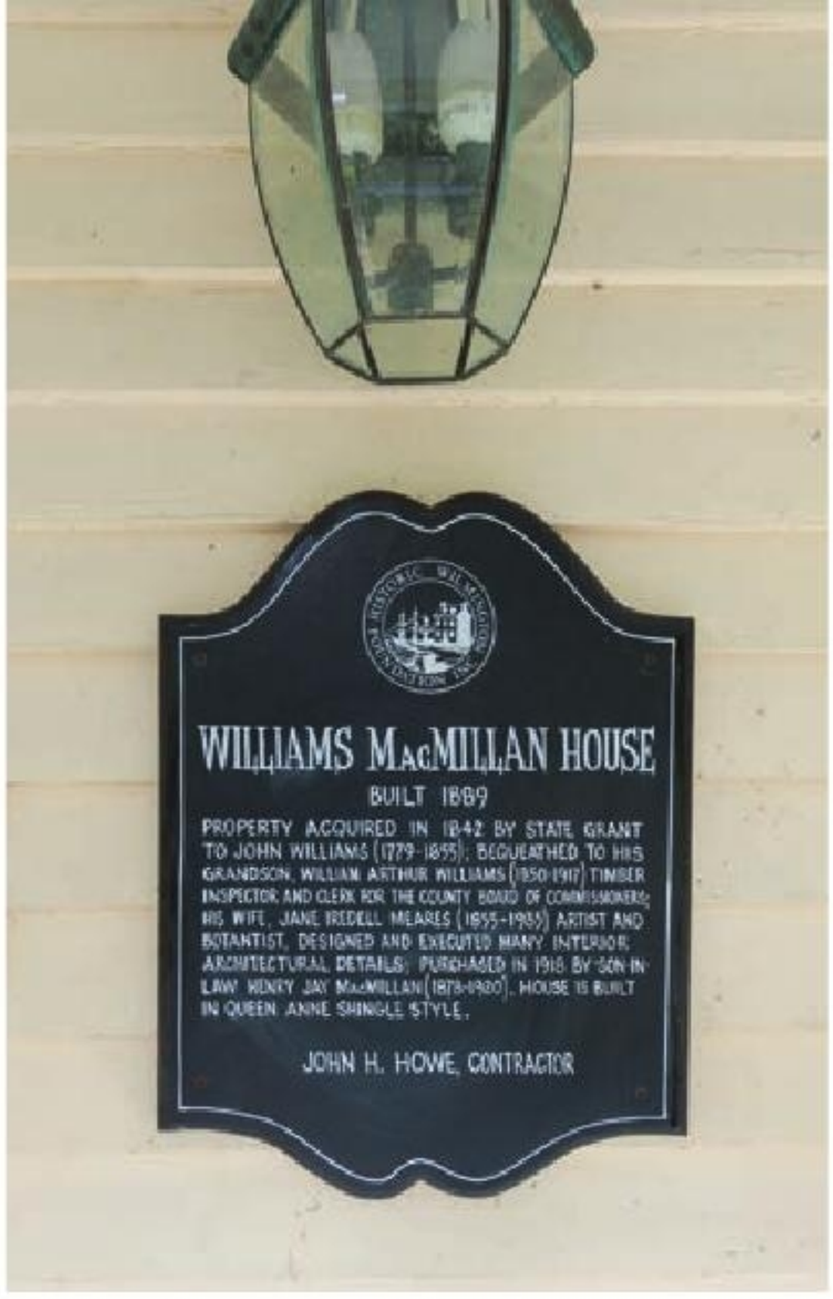
By Ashley Wahl

Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

Sparky is a lousy watch dog. He never barks. He never growls. He never goes berserk. Instead, when the knocker sounds, even if it wakes him from a deep and tranquil sleep, Sparky rises, moseys over to the foyer, and patiently waits for innkeepers Steven Skavroneck and wife, Paula Tirrito, to open the door.

As director of guest relations at Camellia Cottage Bed & Breakfast, the high-peaked Queen Anne on the corner of South Fourth Street and Cottage Lane, Sparky takes his role very seriously. What else would you expect from the most dog-friendly B&B in Wilmington?

If these walls could talk, they would tell you that Sparky is one of a long line of characters who have called this place home. Before


WILLIAMS MacMILLAN HOUSE
BUILT 1889
PROPERTY ACQUIRED IN 1842 BY STATE GRANT TO JOHN WILLIAMS (1779-1855); BEQUEATHED TO HIS GRANDSON, WILLIAM ARTHUR WILLIAMS (1850-1917) TIMBER INSPECTOR AND CLERK FOR THE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS; HIS WIFE, JANE BRIDELL MEARES (1855-1959) ARTIST AND BOTANTIST, DESIGNED AND EXECUTED MANY INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS. PURCHASED IN 1918 BY SON-IN-LAW HENRY JAY MacMILLAN (1878-1920). HOUSE IS BUILT IN QUEEN ANNE SHINGLE STYLE.
JOHN H. HOWE, CONTRACTOR

Steven and Paula bought the Camellia Cottage, where their mishmash of junque and collectibles creates an air that is both irresistibly alluring and winning, it was known as the Williams MacMillan House. Certainly they could entertain you with memories of Henry Jay MacMillan, the celebrated artist whose grandfather built this house in 1889. And they'd surely tell you about Henry's mother, Jane, who had a kiln in the backyard. After Henry died, a man named Larry Campbell bought and converted the place into a B&B at the request of his first wife, although he continued to run it even after his second divorce. Imagine all the interesting and eccentric guests who have spent the night in this Victorian oddity. Lastly, they would tell you that Steven and Paula, who claim to be the "most normal people to have ever lived in this house," are the kind of couple that finishes each other's sentences and happens to enjoy sharing their home with friendly strangers and, perhaps, a few ghosts. Whether or not one of the artists returned to the house after reincarnation is under dispute.

"Many a time, we have guests come to the front door who aren't in the greatest of moods," says Steven, whose gentle voice is fringed with an unmistakable New York accent. "Maybe they had a bad trip or were fighting in the car . . ."

But once they start petting the black and white mutt with the kind brown eyes, even the most curmudgeonly guest seems to brighten up.

"The other wonderful trait that he has for this job is that he's totally non-territorial," says Steven. "Strange dogs come into his house every week and he couldn't care less."

That he doesn't beg when Aunt Bea's savory bacon buns are on the breakfast menu is something of a divine mystery. Then again, he's never tried them.

"We don't want to go there," says Paula, whose decadent three-course breakfasts often include fresh-baked pastries, fruit from the front garden and desserts that might cause you to feel guilty for eating them if you weren't on vacation.

"This morning we had cocoa custard . . ." says Paula. "Yesterday we had a vegan chocolate cake with fresh strawberries and whipped cream. Tomorrow we'll serve homemade cappuccino ice cream . . ."

Having worked as a pastry chef at a hotel and café in Madison, Wisconsin, where she also spent 15 years as a social worker, it isn't a stretch to say that Paula has the perfect credentials for her job. It was as if she'd finally found her true calling when, in 1996, she and Steven bought The Crane House Bed & Breakfast in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

"It was a starter B&B," recalls Paula, whose sprightly voice and playful green eyes make her seem almost impish. "We called it 'European-style' because all the guests had to share one bathroom."

Here, three of four guest rooms had their own claw-foot tub. They bought the 4,700-square-foot B&B in 2002. It was fully furnished and

ready for business.

"This place was very, very Victorian," says Steven, whose collection of antique radios displayed from room to room reveals a penchant for relics, many of which are so much more than decorative. "We sold about half of what was here and brought our own stuff. That's why it's so eclectic."

Look no further than the vintage suitcases stacked à la end table in the living room to see how Paula's whimsical spirit shines, although the nameless wooden merman with the ruby-red lips is another prime example.

"Maybe we should call him Henry?" says Paula, in one of what will be many references to the B&B's resident artistic spirit.

When asked to describe her personal style, however, Paula struggles.

"I don't want anybody to ever be afraid to put their feet on the furniture," she concludes, adding that few instances bring her greater joy than when guests feel so at-home that she catches them napping on the sage-colored settee in the living room.

Sparky recommends the sweeping veranda. In fact, when he arrived in 2003, not long after Steven and Paula decided that a dog-friendly B&B might be their niche, the moment the stray plopped down on the front porch was like a silent contract between dog and innkeepers: Sparky was here to stay.

Some interesting guests have checked in at the Camellia Cottage. Take the teacup chihuahua in the shearling coat and matching cap who shook as if caffeinated and traveled by way of baby sling. Or the Boston terrier who was forced to wear bikinis to the beach. Or the ravenous chocolate lab who, when Paula wasn't looking, successfully swiped a hot apple turnover straight from the oven. And if you've ever wondered what it's like to share a bathroom with a 230-pound English mastiff, Sparky could tell you. But since he is such a perfect gentleman, he might not say.

In the dining room, where breakfast is served anytime between 8 and 9:30 a.m., one of Henry's figure paintings still hangs above the cherry sideboard.

"When we first got here, we were told that Henry painted it," explains Steven, but an appraisal revealed a comic twist: The celestial figures were the handiwork of an eighteenth century Italian artist. Henry augmented the faces.

"At one point, he cut a hole in this painting and hung it on the ceiling with a chandelier strung through it," continues Steven. Although the previous owners had the painting restored, it no longer has any monetary value. But to the innkeepers, it's priceless.

"It endeared Henry to me," says Paula, that he was so irreverent.

Henry's mother, Jane Meares Williams, hand-painted and fired the tiles that comprise the dining room fireplace surround, which appears to illustrate one of Aesop's fables.

From the front porch hammock, guests can admire an elegant grapevine mural that imitates Jane's work although it was commissioned nearly one hundred years later.

In the Crane Suite, located off the foyer across from the living room, the eyes are first drawn to the green tile surround, but the intricate wooden mantle, carved by Jane, is where they linger.

"This was the music room," says Paula, pointing to the bay windows where the baby grand piano would have been. Bird-themed art from the Milwaukee B&B pops against vermillion walls, but

Steven insists that the best thing about the room is that it connects to the former sun room, which he and Paula converted into a luxurious bathroom filled with towering pencil plants and other cacti, all of which Steven started from cuttings over thirty years ago.

"When we moved here, we had to rent a separate heated-panel truck for them," says the resident gardener.

On the second floor, where fresh coffee graciously appears on the landing prior to breakfast, three guest rooms (Henry's Room, Jane's Room and Tuscany Room) are available for nightly rental in addition to a private suite for extended visits. The innkeepers live on the third floor.

Beyond the oceanic canopy bed in Henry's Room is a pair of framed black and white photographs of baby Henry on the knee of each of his grandparents.

"One of Henry's relatives gave those to us," says Steven, who admits he's heard several colorful stories about Henry from local visitors. Aside from being one of the driving forces behind Wilmington's blossoming cultural scene, Henry was also a founding member of the Tidewater Camellia Club.

Over forty mature camellia bushes dot the perennial garden surrounding the house.

"We think some of them are eighty-five years old," says Steven, whose prized plants include holly fern, jasmine, prickly pear, pomegranate, fig, and a 3-year-old peach tree for which he and Paula paid $12 at Rose's department store.

The verdant courtyard with its arbor, cascading with lush vegetation, is a favorite haunt of visitors, Sparky, and, maybe, Henry MacMillan.

Several years ago, Steven and Paula met Pete Brown, a warm and gentle soul who spent nearly two decades keeping up Henry's property.

He called Sparky "Mr. Henry," says Steven, because "he thought that Henry MacMillan was reincarnated as Sparky."

"Sparky is so not Henry," says Paula, although she's not convinced the artist isn't still here.

What she and Steven know for sure is that the Camellia Cottage wouldn't be the same without Henry and without their top dog.

"He's the center of our universe," says Steven, to which Sparky wags his tail, then heads straight for the front porch.

Pure Garden Enchantment

With roots in the Burgundy region of France, the Landfall garden of Hank and Debbie Phillips is a living storybook – complete with bluebirds

By Barbara J. Sullivan · Photographs by Mark Steelman

Snow White's gotten herself lost in the woods. She may be crying. Certainly her situation isn't looking good. One by one, a group of small animals begins to peek out at her from behind the trees. And then, the best part, a flock of bluebirds swoops down with a banner or a ribbon of some sort signaling that things are going to work out just fine. I've been waiting my whole life to see a real, live bluebird. Whenever I hear about bluebirds visiting other people's gardens I admit to a slight twinge of jealousy. I picture Snow White and her new friends, and I wonder when my turn will come. Possibly this is the answer: You have to live in an enchanted garden.

Hank and Debbie Phillips' storybook home and garden in Landfall, although created only eight years ago, could easily be the model for one of those lavish, early-twentieth-century fairy tale illustrations by Arthur Rackham or Jessie Willcox Smith. It has the old-world charm of a slower, more careful era with gardens so delicately and intricately designed they call to mind not so much landscaping as a kind of living embroidery. And, of course, their garden has bluebirds.

The Phillipses' inspiration was an old family chateau and farmhouse compound called Le Bourget in the Burgundy region of France which Hank has visited many times over the years — both to spend time with French cousins and to lend a hand with haying and other farm chores. His family traces its Burgundian heritage back

fourteen generations to 1537, the time of the first flowering of the French Renaissance. Debbie has French roots as well. Her ancestors were Huguenots who fled to England in the wake of religious persecution. For both of them, then, France lives not only in the imagination but in the blood.

Working with an American architect, Ron Hill, the Phillipses borrowed a number of elements from Le Bourget to give their stucco-and-stone-clad home the feeling of a French country house, translating ancient gabled roofs, wooden beams and copper finials into modern-day equivalents. The large cobblestone courtyard of Le Bourget, at times the holding pen for cows, horses and the odd Massey-Ferguson tractor, is rendered here as a tailored and well-cultivated interior courtyard.

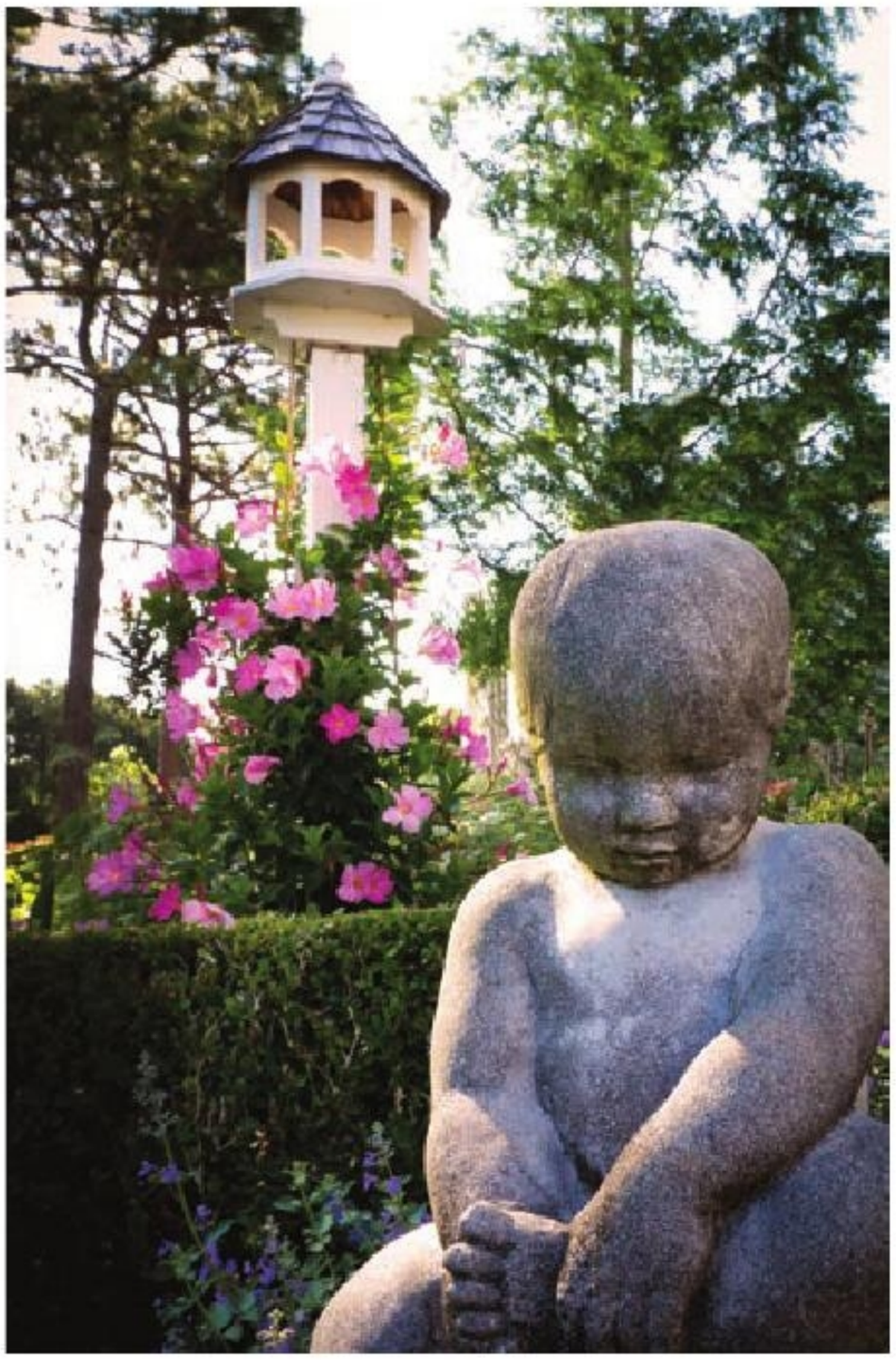
This quiet heart of the house and garden, the interior courtyard greets visitors as soon as they step through the front door into the breezeway. It provides an immediate sense of seclusion and well-ordered tranquility with its crisply outlined parterre of low boxwood hedges, filled in seasonally with colorful annuals and bulbs and delineated by pebbled pathways. A central fountain, walls of espaliered climbing fig and a large bronze bas-relief iris (the French fleur-de-lys) complete the sense that a visitor has stepped into a neatly composed picture.

On the outside of the house, the gardens wrap around elaborately on all four sides. Beginning at the earliest design stages the Phillipses knew they wanted the house and garden to work together in harmony, each complementing the other. This turns out to be a very French thing to do, if you consider that one of the first garden architects to embrace the concept of a garden "referring" to its mother-structure was Frenchman André Le Nôtre. His elaborate geometric gardens at Vaux-le-Vicomte made reference to the architectural bones of the spectacular chateau that had birthed them. Before this, gardens were generally disconnected units, planted out for culinary and medicinal purposes or for entertainment and leisure — but disengaged aesthetically from the main house.

Le Nôtre was also one of the pre-eminent authors of the jardin à la française, a garden style recognizable for its unflinching subjugation of nature into strict geometrical patterns requiring intense levels of maintenance — a kind of trim-the-shrubs-with-nail-clippers-and-banish-every-weed endeavor (think Versailles). Later, British landscapers like Lancelot "Capability" Brown and his followers shifted the Continental taste to a looser, more natural look. French gardens today often combine the best of both paradigms, which is, happily, what the Phillipses' garden does so well.

Debbie Phillips doesn't mind clipping the perfectly scalloped boxwood hedges, the topiaried ligustrum, and the espaliered pyracantha as often as it takes to keep them true to their intended shape. This strict formality is a deliberate foil for the lush, overflowing cottage-garden feeling of many of the other plantings. To achieve the sense of nature brimming over with color and texture, she incorporates the fountain-like plumes of pink-flowered Pennisetum 'Karley Rose'; the blousy, greenish-white pom-poms of hydrangea 'Limelight'; and the warm corals, peaches and pinks of shrub roses like 'Lady Elsie May', 'Cécile Brunner' and 'Apricot Drift' which produce abundant blooms in the summer. To tie such a profusion of plant material together she uses the technique of repetition. Plants repeat at intervals (clumps of purple iris, stands of deep purple 'May Night' salvia, and rivers of flowering bugleweed); pairs of

"Beginning at the earliest design stages the Phillipses knew they wanted the house and garden to work together in harmony, each complementing the other. This turns out to be a very French thing to do, if you consider that one of the first garden architects to embrace the concept of a garden "referring" to its mother-structure was Frenchman André Le Nôtre."



arches and benches echo one another in a kind of loose symmetry; favorite trees and shrubs such as crape myrtles and hydrangeas reappear at intervals, providing a unifying thread as visitors enjoy the detailed complexity of the separate beds and walkways.

Most importantly, the color palette of coral/peach/pink, violet/blue/purple, whites and soft yellows tie the entire landscape together from the paisley-shaped beds in the front yard through the meandering side paths to the carved beds that wrap around the expansive back patios.

Debbie's love of gardening came directly from her mother, whom she considers her mentor. They worked together on several gardens when Debbie lived in Ohio, and as she puts it, "I follow in my mother's footsteps every day." This garden mentoring undoubtedly imparted a strong dose of tenacity, willpower and patience as well as a love of beauty. Anyone who's spent time trying to wrestle a garden into shape knows that the fairy tale look of a delicate clematis vine weaving its way through a shell pink rose — or any other natural-seeming scenario — comes not from the pixies, but from old-fashioned hard work. You have to crawl in the dirt, clamber up ladders, endure thorns, prickers and bugs. You have to look the occasional heartbreak straight in the eye because, the truth of the matter is, the woodpecker will girdle the bark of your loquat, fierce north winds will shear your Confederate jasmine, crown rot will decimate your spreading ajuga, and borers will kill your willow tree. Debbie Phillips has dealt with all of this and more.

It's no surprise that passersby who spot her in comfortable old work clothes ask if she's "the gardener." What they mean is, are you being paid to toil out here in the hot sun, trimming the edges of the lawn, pulling out clumps of sedge grass, arranging the climbing 'Sally Holmes' rose just-so over the wooden tuteur? She pauses and thinks for a second. "Well, yes," she answers, "I am the gardener." She is, indeed, the gardener.

Although Hank puts in his share of hours raking, mowing and edging, Debbie does almost everything else by herself. She trims, prunes, weeds, de-bugs, fertilizes, triages and nurses sick plants. She will sow some packets of poppy seeds for fun and reap a battalion of dark-eyed beauties. She will take cuttings of tall, airy cat's whiskers or bright chartreuse coleus and stick the offspring in here and there where they're needed to add texture and color. Like a true old-world gardener, she's frugal, dividing and transplanting dozens of perennials and groundcovers to increase her stock.

It's Debbie who's the pixie in the garden. "It's like Mother Nature's helping me," she says. "Together we solve problems." And there's the heart of it. When you work so intimately with your plants that you know just what will make them happy, when you're all but on a first name basis with your butterflies and hummingbirds, when, as she says, you "always have gardening in mind," then you're in a good place. And, you're rewarded for all this effort with a kind of otherworldly loveliness. You've connected with enchantment and the world of the imagination. Nature loves you. And, of course — no surprise here — you get bluebirds. Real live bluebirds.

Barbara Sullivan is the author of Garden Perennials for the Coastal South. *Her downtown Wilmington garden has been featured on the PBS show* Garden Smart.

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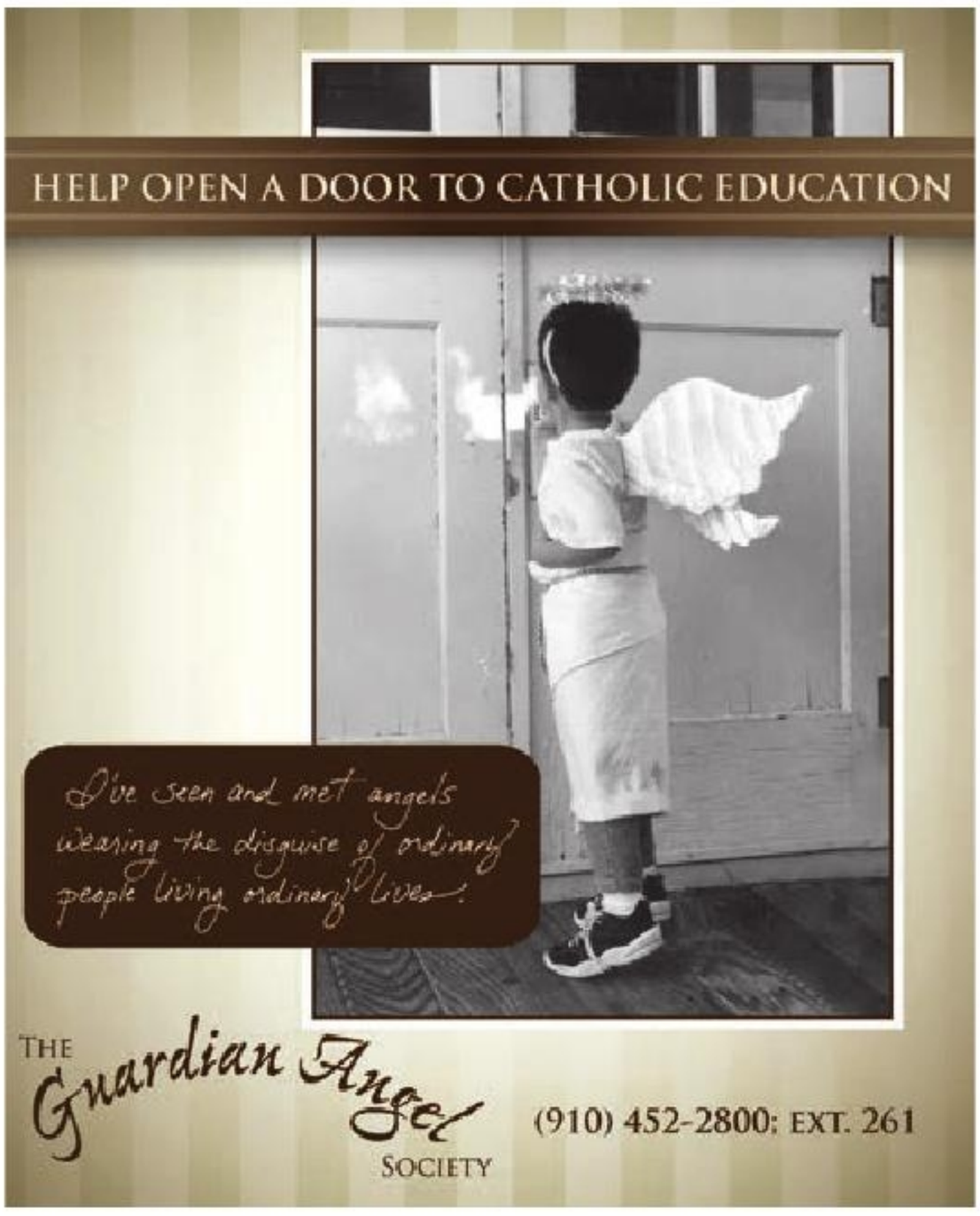
HELP OPEN A DOOR TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION
I've seen and met angels wearing the disguise of ordinary people living ordinary lives.
The Guardian Angel Society
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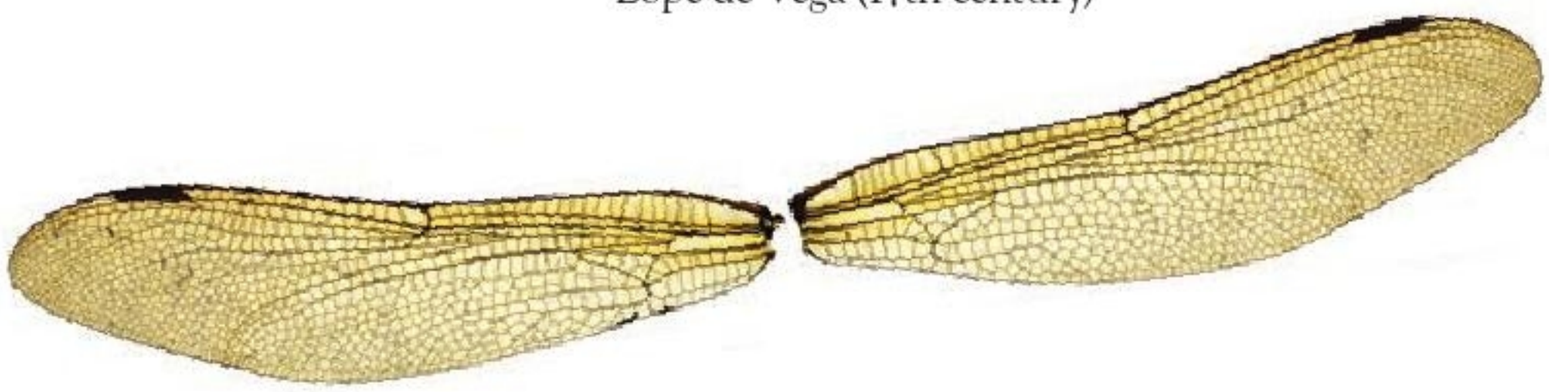
ALMANAC

July

By Noah Salt

With a few flowers in my garden, half a dozen pictures and some books, I live without envy.

– Lope de Vega (17th century)



The Gardener's Essential Bookshelf

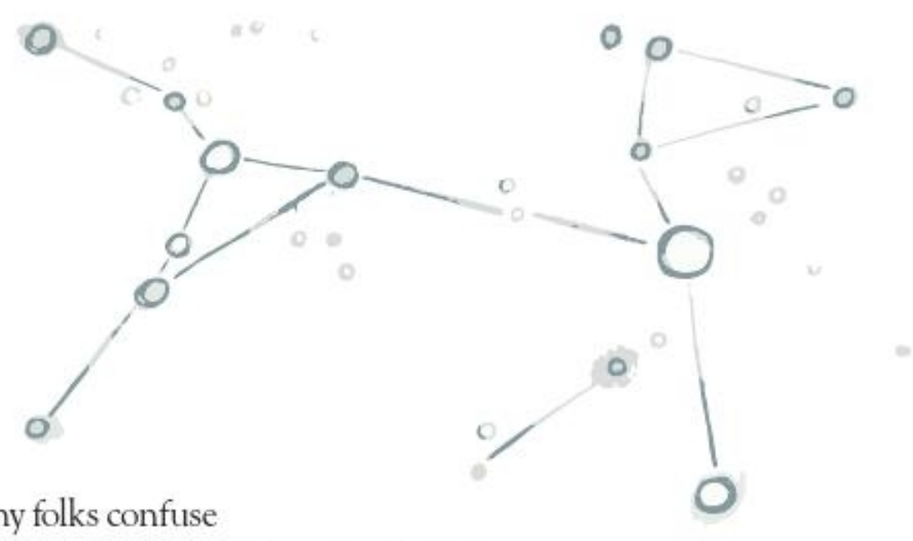
"Shame on us, perhaps, for being so confused by the beauty of July. For the weather then is lovely, perhaps the loveliest of the year for those who crave warmth. There is a predictability to the brightness of the sun that one experiences in no other season, one faultless day breaking after another. There is real heat, the kind that puts an end to garden chores (for us, at least, who are not used to it) and offers a quiet, restorative day at the river. Rain still falls, but it occurs late in the day or when we are sleeping, the earth's risen moisture returning to it as thunderstorms crashing against the mountains. Best of all, we wake some mornings to find that a cloud has settled into the garden, trapped against our hillside until the sun's rays dissipate it in milky streams, leaving the garden wet with its moisture and every spider web silvered over."

– From *The Writer in the Garden*, "A Year at North Hill," by Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd, edited by Jane Garmey

July's Good Timing

Even if there weren't so many important birthdays in July – America's and our good ladywife's come firstly to mind, but also Ernest Hemingway, Nelson Mandela, Ringo Starr, Dubya Bush and Bond Girl Eva Green – we love it simply because it represents the heart of summer and a nice hinge on the gardening year. It's the longest stretch of typically clear hot weather with days that shorten by a minute or so every day as the month proceeds, peak time for family reunions and picnics and Fourth fireworks under the stars. In the garden, the showiest blooms of June are fading off, but some woodland phlox and old roses still hold their color. The Joe pye weed and Queen Anne's lace are taking over and iridescent dragonflies seem everywhere. Founding Father Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, worked in his beloved garden at Monticello only a few days before he passed away, aptly enough, on July 4, 1826 – the fiftieth anniversary of the nation's birth. Three hundred miles away, and only hours apart, John Adams, the only other Declaration signer to become president, also passed away – the most stunning and patriotic coincidence in the history of America. A toast to July's amazing timing. Now, what to get the wife . . .

Dog Days and a Little Night Music



Growing up, some of us assumed summer's infamous "Dog Days" got so named because July days are so durn hot come midsummer, dogs either go mad or crawl under the nearest porch for refuge. In fact, our thinking was on the right track. Officially the "Dog Days" commence on July 3 and wind up on August 11, indeed technically the hottest part of summer, though the name actually comes from Sirius, the so-called "Dog Star" in the constellation Canis Major – the brightest star in the night sky, which can be seen from anywhere on planet Earth on winter and spring evenings. One reason it's more difficult to see in midsummer (though not that hard) is its close proximity to the sun, which farmers from ancient times believed made the days accordingly hotter – enough to drive a dog either mad or under the porch.

And what of that most common night sound in midsummer – the evening rasp of the katydid? Many folks confuse crickets with katydids, which are related to both grasshoppers and crickets but a species all their own, nocturnal creatures from the vast tettigoniidae (pronounce that after a couple of cool summer gin and tonics) insect family that inhabit forest trees and shrubs emitting a rhythmic mating call heard prominently from deciduous woodlands and fields. Sometimes called "bush crickets," the large insects are rarely seen by day, neatly camouflaged with their long antennae and green coloring to blend in with leaves. The Chinese consider the noble katydid a symbol of fertility and good fortune. And farmers have long used its first song in midsummer to count 90 days until the first frost.

July 2014

Arts Calendar

Fourth of July Celebration

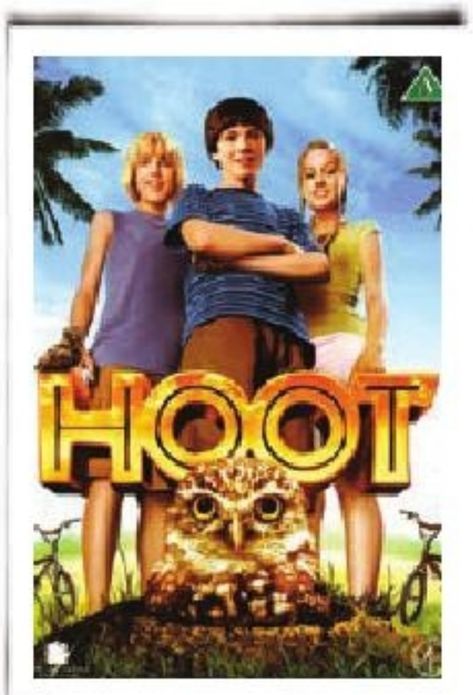
7/4

Jazz at the Mansion

7/10

Pleasure Island Concert

7/25



Movies at the Lake

Sundays

7/1 Sublime Tribute

6 p.m. The Penguin presents Badfish: A Tribute to Sublime. Admission: $15–20. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 332-0983 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

7/1 Writing for Healing

6:15–8:45 p.m. Workshop for Personal Power and Self Confidence. Space is limited; pre-registration required. Cost: $75. All Love Healing, 217 North Fifth Avenue, Wilmington. Info/Register: jennifer@allovehealing.com.

7/1 Bruce Hornsby & The Noisemakers

6:30 p.m. The Penguin presents the eclectic sounds of Bruce Hornsby & The Noisemakers. Admission: $35–40. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 332-0983 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

7/1–4 NC Fourth of July Festival

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Tuesday); 9 a.m. – 10 p.m. (Wednesday); 8 a.m. – 10 p.m. (Thursday); 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. (Friday). Four-day patriotic celebration featuring an arts and crafts show, military exhibits, classic car show, freedom run, fireman's competition, food vendors, children's games, live music, beach activities, parade, fireworks and more. Various venues in Southport. Info: (910) 457-5578 or www.nc4thofjuly.com.

7/2 Benefit Picnic

4–8 p.m. Join the Bald Head Island Conservancy for a benefit picnic including live music by Mark Daffer, silent auction, bake sale, kids activities, games, raffles, BBQ, fried chicken and all the fixin's. Admission/Meal Tickets: $10/child; $20/adult. Raffle tickets: $50/ticket; $500/12 tickets. Proceeds benefit the BHI Conservancy Sea Turtle Protection Program. The Common at Cape Fear Station, Kinnakeet Way, Bald Head Island. Info: (910) 457-0089 or www.BHIC.org.

7/2 Symphony Orchestra

7:30 p.m. The North Carolina Symphony performs its annual Stars & Stripes Concert featuring patriotic favorites and high-spirited classics honoring the USA. Admission: $10–27. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 962-3500 or www.uncw.edu/arts/kenancalendar.

7/2–6 Live Theater

8 p.m. (Wednesday–Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Opera House Theatre Company presents the Broadway classic *On the Town*, the story of three sailors distracted by romance while on a 24-hour leave in New York City. Admission: $27. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.operahousetheatrecompny.net.

7/3–6 Live Theater

8 p.m. (Thursday–Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Thalian Association presents the Port City premiere of *Red*, exploring the life of acclaimed artist Mark Rothko while painting murals for the Four Seasons restaurant in 1958. Admission: $15–30. Red Barn Studio Theatre, 1122 South Third Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 251-1788 or redbarnstudiotheatre.com.

7/4 Fourth of July Celebration

5–10 p.m. Downtown celebration featuring food vendors, live music by the 440th Army Band and fireworks along the Cape Fear River. Admission: Free. Riverfront Park, Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-4602 or www.wilmingtonrecreation.com.

7/4 Airlie Concert

6–8 p.m. The Imitations join the summer concert series at Airlie Gardens performing Motown and beach music. Admission: $8. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

7/4–5 Ocean City Jazz Festival

5–9 p.m. (Friday & Saturday). Contemporary jazz festival featuring live performances, food trucks, beer, wine and silent auction. Artists include the Ira Wiggins Quartet, Yolanda Rabun, Lin Rountree, Nicholas Cole, Lois Deloatch-Gomes, The Scott Sawyer Trio, John Brown Quartet and Cyrus Chestnut. Admission: $15–50. Ocean City Community Center, 2649 Island Drive, North Topsail Beach. Info: www.oceancityjazzfest.com.

7/4–5 Dinner Theatre

7 p.m. TheatreNOW presents *The Gentlemen Pirate*, a musical by Zach Hanner featuring the salty tales of the good pirate Stede Bonnet and his dealings with Blackbeard along the North Carolina Coast. Admission: $24–38. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

7/5 Historic Walking Tour

10–11:30 a.m. Discover the Port City's rich past, architectural, social and cultural history through a guided walking tour of Forest Hills and the Streetcar Suburbs hosted by the Historic Wilmington Foundation. Admission: $5–10. 1801 Market Street & 602 Colonial Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-2511 or www.historicwilmington.org.

7/5 Guided Group Meditation

5:15–7:15 p.m. Have More Fun: Energy Clearing Meditation For Enjoying Your Life. Cost: $15. McKay Healing Arts, 4916 Wrightsville Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (949) 547-4402 or www.allovehealing.com.

7/5 Reggae Fest

6 p.m. An evening of uplifting reggae music including performances by Culture, Kenyatta Hill, Edge Michael, The Itals and Wilmington's own D.H.I.M. Admission: $20–30. The Beach House Bar & Grill, 7219 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 264-2712 or www.thebeachhousereggaefest.com.

7/5 Island Independence 5K

7:30 a.m. Fast, flat course beginning and ending at the Memorial Chapel in Topsail Beach. Food, beverages and activities post-race with awards ceremony. Admission: $15–35. Proceeds benefit Venture Crew 2727, the Chapel, and local scout families with loved ones battling cancer. Emma Anderson

Memorial Chapel, 1040 South Anderson Boulevard, Topsail Beach. Info: www.its-go-time.com/island-independence-5k-july-5.

7/6 Jazz Brunch

12–2 p.m. Jazz brunch featuring the Pantastic Steel Band. Admission: $15–20. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

7/6 Live Music

4–7 p.m. Join Ray Brooks and the Countrymen live at Sweet 'n Savory Pub. Sweet 'n Savory Pub, 2012 Eastwood Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 679-8101 or www.sweetnsavorypub.com.

7/8 Writing for Healing

6:15–8:45 p.m. Workshop for Personal Power and Self Confidence. Space is limited; pre-registration required. Cost: $75. All Love Healing, 217 North Fifth Avenue, Wilmington. Info/Register: jennifer@allllovehealing.com.

7/10 Love Your Love Life

6:15–8:15 p.m. Workshop for couples and singles who want to share love that is out of this world. Pre-registration required. Cost: $30. All Love Healing, 217 North Fifth Avenue, Wilmington. Info/Register: jennifer@allllovehealing.com.

7/10 Jazz at the Mansion

6:30–8:30 p.m. Saxophonist Darryl Donnell Murrill. Admission: $5–12. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

7/11 Survivor Luncheon

12–1:30 p.m. "A Day in the Life" luncheon/fundraiser for the Centre of Redemption; includes testimonials from survivors and an update on the organization's expanding work. Admission: $25; $250/table. Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: www.centreofredemption.com.

7/11 Pleasure Island Concert

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Justin Fox Trio (classic blues meets southern rock). Admission: Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

7/11–13 Pro-Am Surf Fest

8 a.m. (Friday–Sunday). One of the largest surfing contests on the east coast, attracting dozens of amateur and professional surfers from around the world. This year's event boasts over $25,000 in cash and prizes and a music and arts festival on Saturday evening. Oceanic Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-3821 or www.sweetwatersurfshop.com.

7/11–13 East Coast Classic

12–11 p.m. (Friday); 2–7 p.m. (Saturday); 2–8 p.m. (Sunday). Annual Pleasure Island King Mackerel fishing tournament features captain's meeting, raffle, kick-off party and awards ceremony plus live entertainment by the Imitations, DJ Mike Worley and Jim Quick & The Coastline Band. Admission: $250–300/boat. Municipal Docks, Canal Drive, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-0240 or www.gotemonliveclassic.com.

7/12 Classy Chassis Car Show

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Combination car show, art sale and flea market featuring classic cars, food, music, 50-50 raffle and a variety of arts, crafts and antiques for sale. Admission: Free. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org.

7/12 Battleship Legacy Series

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Under the Sea with Submarine USS NC. Engage with submarine veterans who served on the SSN 777 and explore various eras of submarine development, technology, equipment, and everyday life aboard the undersea warriors. Admission: $6–12. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

7/12 Battleship 101

10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Volunteers throughout the ship engage visitors in the areas of gunnery, radar, sick-bay, galley and engineering, offering a glimpse of what life was like aboard the WWII Battleship. Admission: $6–12. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

7/12 Fort Fisher Program

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Two Navies at Fort Fisher. Educational program focusing on the US Navy's blockading fleet as well as the blockaders who attempted to bring needed supplies into the Confederacy. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher State Historic Site, 1610 Fort Fisher Boulevard South, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-5538 or www.friendsoffortfisher.com/calendar.

7/12 Moe in Concert

6:30 p.m. The Penguin presents an evening with rock/jam band Moe. Admission: $25–30. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 332-0983 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

7/12 SUP Boot Camp

6:30–8:30 a.m. Brief intro clinic and paddle workout. Admission: $45 (includes board and paddle rental). Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 777-4979.

7/13 Bridal Expo

12–3 p.m. Summer bridal event featuring over fifty of the area's finest wedding vendors and sweet giveaways. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 259-8323 or www.carolinaweddingguide.com.

7/14–18 Dance Camp

9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Week-long camp for children ages 7–9. Students will learn modern, ballet, and hip-hop techniques as well as the art of choreography. Admission: $140. Dance Cooperative, 5202 Carolina Beach Road, Suite 17, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-4995 or www.thedancecooperative.org.

7/16 Gary Clark, Jr. in Concert

7 p.m. Grammy-winning American guitarist and actor Gary Clark, Jr. brings his style of Texas Blues to Wilmington. Admission: $29–32. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 332-0983 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

7/18 Airlie Concert

6–8 p.m. L Shape Lot (Americana, bluegrass and country). Admission: $8. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

7/18 Variety Show

7–10 p.m. *The Martini Men*. Musical tribute to Dean Martin, Elvis and Neil Diamond. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

7/19 Oakdale Walking Tour

10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Historical walking tour of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery and the history of its Civil War veterans given by local historian, Ed Gibson. Admission: $10. Oakdale Cemetery, 520 North Fifteenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-9947 or www.oakdalecemetery.org.

7/21–25 Dance Camp

9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Three-day camp for children ages 3–6, where students will explore movement, stimulate imagination, and promote creativity through dance, art, yoga and music. Admission: $100. Dance Cooperative, 5202 Carolina Beach Road, Suite 17, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-4995 or www.thedancecooperative.org.

7/22 Book Reading

7 p.m. Book reading with novelist and journalist Bill Morris for the release of his third book, a crime novel, *Motor City Burning*. Pomegranate Books, 4418 Park Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 452-1107 or www.pombooks.net.

7/25 SoulShine Festival Tour

7 p.m. A first-of-its-kind event that pairs a yoga retreat with the stylings of Michael Franti and Spearhead, as well as performances by reggae band SOJA, poppy folkster Brett Dennen and singer/songwriter Trevor Hall. Admission: $20–99. Battleship Park, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 332-0983 or www.hukaentertainment.com.

7/25 Gallery Walk

6–9 p.m. Self-guided tour through downtown Wilmington galleries and studios showcasing local art through opening receptions, demonstrations, artist discussions and exhibitions. Admission: Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.wilmingtonfourthfridays.com.

7/25 Opening Exhibition

6–9 p.m. Opening reception for an exhibition of new paintings by Sally Jacobs using abstract environments to record the psychological push and pull between mother and son. On view through August 9. Wilma D. Daniels Gallery, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7442 or cfcc.edu/blogs/wilmagallery.

7/25 Pleasure Island Concert

6:30–8:30 p.m. Mark Roberts Band performs classic rock and beach music. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

7/25–27 Children's Theater

7:30 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Brunswick Little Theatre presents *Into the Woods*, a musical by Stephen Sondheim featuring familiar characters like Little Red Riding Hood and Cinderella. Admission: $6–18. Odell Williamson Auditorium, Brunswick Community College, 50 College Road NW, Supply. Info: (910) 269-1518 or www.brunswicklittletheatre.com.

7/25–27 Cape Fear Blues Festival

7:30–10:30 p.m. (Friday); 11 a.m. – 10 p.m. (Saturday); 12–6 p.m. (Sunday). A three-day, all-day celebration showcasing local, regional and national musicians with live concerts, blues jam, workshops and a cruise aboard the *Henrietta III* riverboat. Market Street & Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 350-8822 or www.capefearblues.org/festival.

7/25–27 Live Opera

8 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Opera Wilmington presents *The Merry Widow* starring Nancy King in the role of Hanna Glawari and Michael Rallis; conducted by Steven Errante. Admission: $10–20. UNCW Cultural Arts Building, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.opera-wilmington.org.

7/26 Kids' Triathlon

8 a.m. Kid-friendly race for ages 5–13 featuring swimming, bicycling and running distances based on age group. Awards ceremony, food and activities post-race. Admission: $35–40. Wilmington Family YMCA, 2710 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-9622 or www.wilmingtonfamilyymca.org.

7/30 Live Theater

8 p.m. Opera House Theatre Company presents *Kiss Me Kate*, a comic play within a play featuring two egos on steroids starring opposite each other in a musical version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Admission: $27. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday Farmers' Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market offering fresh produce, baked goods and unique crafts directly from local vendors. Open through October 4. Admission: Free. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Monday Turtle Talks

7 p.m. Learn about sea turtles with the Pleasure Island Sea Turtle Project. Program runs through August 25. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Monday–Wednesday Cinematique

7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. Check online for updated listings and special screenings. Admission: $7. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Tuesday Kure Beach Market

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Open-air market featuring locally grown produce and artisan crafts. Open through August 26. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Tuesday Wine Tasting

6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South

Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglasswinebar.com.

Tuesday — Rich Lambert Live

7–9:30 p.m. Join Rich Lambert live every Tuesday at Sweet 'n Savory Cafe. Sweet 'n Savory Café, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.sweetnsavorycafe.com.

Tuesday — Cape Fear Blues Jam

8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday — Farmers' Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, baked goods and the best in handmade crafts. Open through November 26. Admission: Free. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 U.S. Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.com.

Wednesday — T'ai Chi at CAM

12–1 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday — Wine Pairing

5–6:30 p.m. Learn about a different style of wine each week as well as which foods best bring out its flavor. All bottles of wine are $5 off. Sweet 'n Savory Cafe, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.sweetnsavorycafe.com.

Wednesday — Beer Tasting

5–6:30 p.m. Weekly specials posted on Facebook. Admission: Free. Sweet 'n Savory Pub, 2012 Eastwood Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 679-8101 or www.thepubatsweetnsavory.com.

Wednesday — Summer Nature Series

6–7 & 7–8 p.m. Birds of Prey (7/9); Night Hike (7/16); Planetarium & Stargazing (7/23); Gators (7/30). Admission: $5. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

Wednesday — Guided Meditation

6:15–7:15 p.m. A growing community of people who desire connection within themselves and with others. Live a Rich Life: Energy Clearing Meditation for Abundance (July 2); Love One Another: Energy Clearing Meditation for Peaceful Relationships (July 9); Surrender: Energy Clearing Meditation for Manifesting Your Desires (July 16); Meet Your Spirit Animal: Energy Clearing Meditation for Connecting with Higher Guidance (July 23). Cost: $10–15 (you choose). McKay Healing Arts, 4916 Wrightsville Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (949) 547-4402 or www.alllovehealing.com.

Wednesday — Benny Hill Jazz

7–9:30 p.m. Live jazz by Benny Hill. Sweet 'n Savory Café, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.sweetnsavorycafe.com.

Wednesday — ComedyNOW

8 p.m. Local, regional and national acts; open mic, standup, films and more. Bar and kitchen open. Tickets: $3. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Thursday — Sounds of Summer

6:30–8 p.m. Family-friendly outdoor music series at Wrightsville Beach Park. The Fury (7/3); Heart & Soul (7/10); Millenia Funk'n Band (7/17); Blivet (7/24); The Schoolboys (7/31). Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Park, 1 Bob Sawyer Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Thursday — Boardwalk Blast Music

6:30–9:30 p.m. Family-friendly concerts at the Boardwalk featuring a sunset fireworks display. Massive Grass & Southern Trouble (7/3); Beach Billy Brothers (7/10); Dubtown Cosmonauts (7/17); Jack Jack 180 (7/24); Mark Roberts Band (7/31). Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Cape Fear Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

Thursday — Live Music

7–9:30 p.m. Fried Lot (7/3, 7/24 & 7/31); Bub & Morgan White (7/10 & 7/17). Sweet 'n Savory Café, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.sweetnsavorycafe.com.

Thursday & Friday — Yoga at CAM

12–1 p.m. (Thursday); 5:30–6:30 p.m. (Friday). Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Open to beginners and experienced participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Thursday & Sunday — CAM Tours

7:30 p.m. (Thursday); 2 p.m. (Sunday). Explore the newest exhibits at Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday — Music on the Town

6–9 p.m. Family-friendly concerts with bounce houses, cotton candy and snow cones for kids. Millenia Funk'n Band (7/4); Seneca Guns (7/11); Painted Man (7/18); 40 East (7/25). Admission: Free. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Main Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-5131 or www.mayfairetown.com.

Friday — Live Music

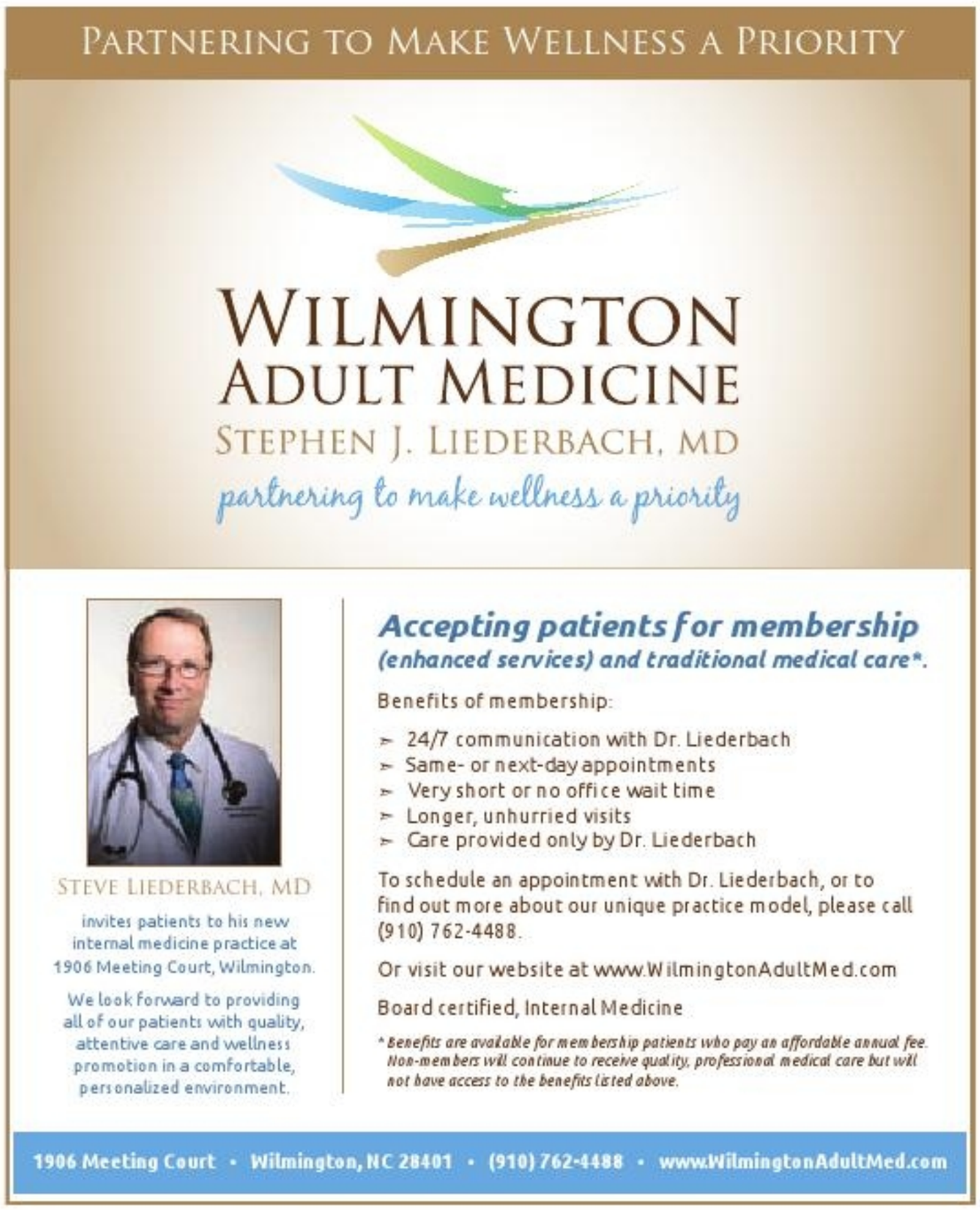
6–9 p.m. Jacob Stockton (7/4); Wes & Fred (7/18); Travis Shallow (7/25). Sweet 'n Savory Pub, 2012 Eastwood Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 679-8101 or www.sweetnsavorypub.com.

Friday — Downtown Concert

6–10 p.m. Free downtown concert series overlooking the Cape Fear River. Funky Monks: Red Hot Chili Peppers tribute (7/11); Draw the Line: Aerosmith tribute (7/18); 20 Ride: Zack Brown Band tribute (7/25). Admission: Free. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-7349 or www.downtownsundown.com.

Friday — Live Music

7–9:30 p.m. Rich Lambert (7/4); Wes & Shawnette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We look forward to providing all of our patients with quality, attentive care and wellness promotion in a comfortable, personalized environment.
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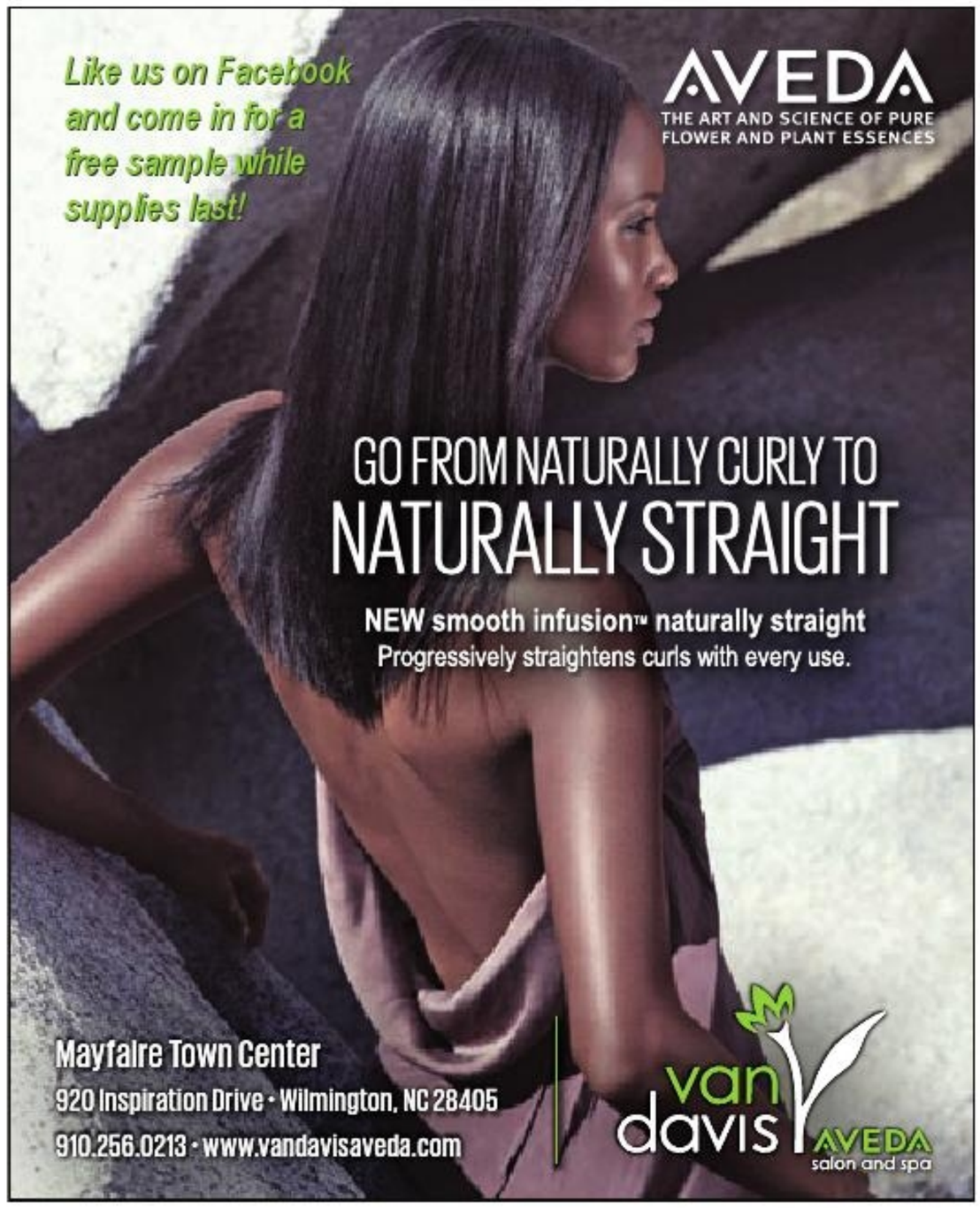
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(7/11); Masonboro Sound (7/18); 2 Docs & a Bay (7/25). Sweet 'n Savory Café, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.sweetnsavorycafe.com.

Friday & Saturday — Sampling

6–8 p.m. (Friday); 12–5 p.m. (Saturday). Sample unique boutique wines as well as extra virgin olive oils and vinegars before you buy. Admission: Free. Taste the Olive, The Forum, 1125 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-6457 or www.tastetheolive.com.

Saturday — Riverfront Farmers' Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artists, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Open through November 22. Admission: Free. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com.

Saturday — Carolina Beach Farmers' Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling food, herbal products and handmade crafts. Open through October 4. Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 and Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 431-8122 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

Saturday — Super Saturday Fun Time

3 p.m. Live theater and variety show. Tickets: $8. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Saturday — Live Music

3–6 p.m. Signal Fire (7/5) . 5–8 p.m. Overtyme (7/12 & 7/26); David Dixon (7/19). Sweet 'n Savory Pub, 2012 Eastwood Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 679-8101 or www.sweetnsavorypub.com.

Saturday — Live Music

7–9:30 p.m. Ben & Heather (7/5); John & Lean (7/12 & 7/26); Jerry Powell (7/19). Sweet 'n Savory Café, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.sweetnsavorycafe.com.

Sunday — Historic Marketplace

10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Downtown marketplace featuring some of the finest arts and crafts vendors in the Cape Fear area, plus entertainment on a rotating basis. Admission: Free. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 254-0907 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com.

Sunday — Boogie in the Park

4–7 p.m. Family-friendly concerts in the park. The Mark Roberts Band (7/6); Blivet (7/13); L Shaped Lot (7/20); Selah Dub (7/27). Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 456-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Sunday — Bluewater Waterfront Music

4–7 p.m. Summer concerts on the waterfront patio. Back of the Boat Tour (7/6); Mark Roberts (7/13); Central Park (7/20); Overtyme (7/27). Admission: Free. Bluewater Waterfront Grill, 4 Marina Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-8500 or www.bluewaterdining.com.

Sunday — Movies at the Lake

8:45 p.m. Family-friendly outdoor movie screening by the lake at Carolina Beach. Popcorn, soda and candy available for purchase. *The Nut Job* (7/6); *Free Birds* (7/13); *Super Buddies* (7/20); *Hoot* (7/27). Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 and Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

To add a calendar event, please contact Ashley at ashley@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

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Port City People

Cape Fear Garden Club Azalea Garden Tour

Ribbon Cutting

Friday, April 11, 2014

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Queen's Court: (l-r): Beth Stovall, Megan Cox, Elizabeth Baker, Jacelyn Naylor, Grace Ann Carroll, Kensley Leonard, Hillary Laster, Victoria Baskett

Chef Keith Rhodes, Miss North Carolina Johna Edmonds

Queen Azalea Kirsten Haglund, Stephen E. Coble, President, 2014 Azalea Festival

Soloists Anna Lee Heneghan, Claire Nabell

The Azalea Queen's Court & Citadel Cadet Escorts

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Port City People

Hope Gala 2014

The JDRF Coastal Carolina Branch

Saturday, May 17, 2014

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Jenny Turek, Henry Cherry

Keith & Kristy Gunther, Abi & Michael Mattis

Britt Warren & John Carpenter

Steve & Gigi Horsley

Meghan Cowan, Max Vernier, Rachael Sophiea, Maggie Wilson, Pierre Naude

Marc Mezzela, Aileen Carr

Jenny & Nick Wedemeyer

Allison Graham, Barbie Rogers, Rose Zimmer, Sharon Chadwick

Jeremy & Sarah Beakes

Cristin & John Gizdic

Don & S&y Spiers, Melisa Gallison, Jimmy Hopkins

Port City People

YWCA 100th Anniversary Gala
Wilmington Convention Center
Monday, May 5, 2014
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Zach & Abby Adams, Rob Rickert, Lauren Dom

Arlene Lawson, Maxzine & Bishop James Utley, Jr, Linda Pearce

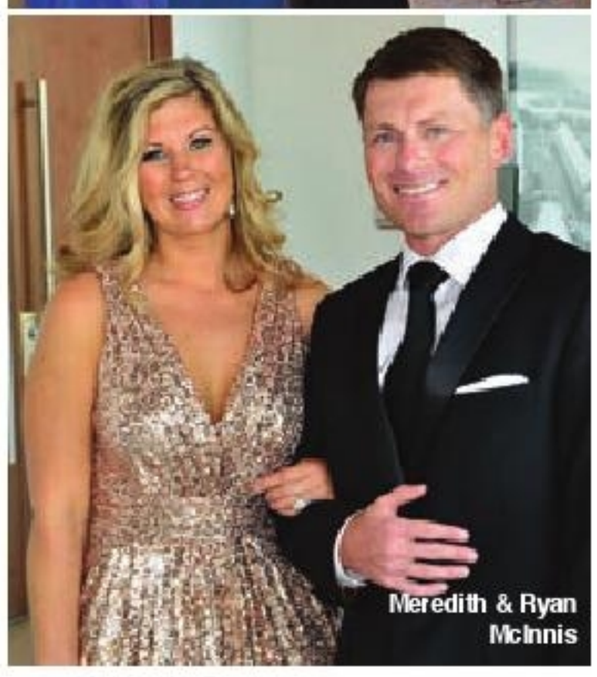
Trip & Amanda Coyne

Fran & Joe Kertesz

Frances Weller

Luke Faulkenberry & Tiffany Jackson

Jenny Turek & Henry Cherry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Port City People

The Carousel Center's 11th Annual Making Legends Local Gala

Saturday, April 26, 2014

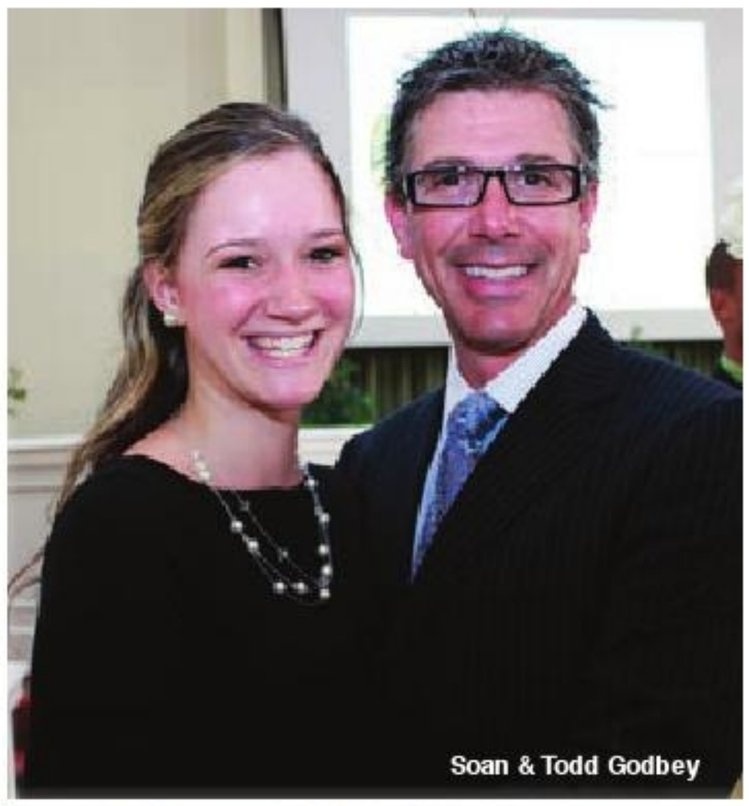
Photographs by Ariel Keener

John & Linda Ross

Lisa & Patrick Ballantine with Debbie & Bill Rudisill

Trevor & Roni Hursthouse with Andy & Ada Atkinson

Commissioner Johnathan Barfield, Laura, Elizabeth & Camille Barfield


Soan & Todd Godbey

Liz Constantinou, Rebecca Alvaro, Lisa Brooks

Jeff Church, Rich Novelli, Derrick Brown, Skip Tyson, Dan Devido

Thomas Winner & Emma Grace Wright

John & Susan Hitt

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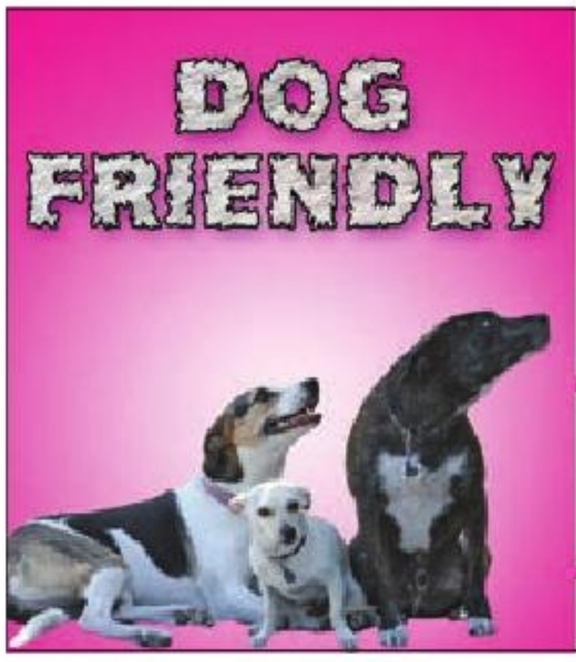

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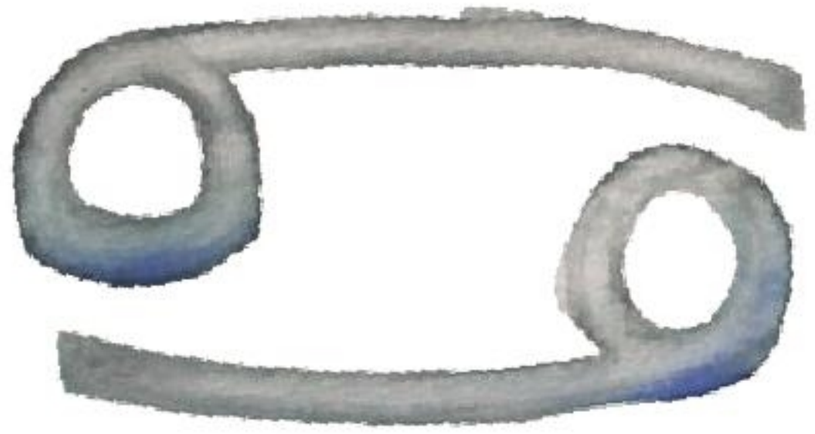

July's stars are on the move

By Astrid Stellanova

Everybody seems to be riding, sliding and gliding into the astral station this month. Better ask yourself if it's the destination you planned on or the one you got fooled into by some celestial ticket agent.

Cancer (June 21—July 22)
When Mercury is direct in your sign, let's just say it is a safe bet that YOU are too. As in blunt and to the point. That is the good news on July 1. And wait — here's a little bonus. It is a very good time to be direct, because an old love or missed opportunity arises. Seize it, baby. "If it's for you, don't let it get by you," as my grandma said. After the 15th, Leo exerts a lot of financial pull for your sign. $Ca-ching, Honey$! You're gonna be geo-caching — if that's what going out and digging up a windfall means.

Leo (July 23—August 22)
I hate to talk practicalities with a Leo — that's like speaking Cajun to the clerk at the Climax post office. It'll get you puzzled looks but zero comprehension. But here goes anyhow: Keep your britches on, and drive the speed limit. Wear your seat belt. Check your credit rating. And own your problems. Your life may not look broken to you, but you're gonna have to fix it anyhow. Starting today, Leo, ask yourself if being so right trumps all hope of personal happiness.

Virgo (August 23—September 22)
The stars are gonna blind you with a meteor shower of duckies, daisies and general, all-purpose happiness this month, especially on the 25th. The 26th is also a red letter day to mark on the calendar — everything looks bright and right. Call your friends and get the party started. You are going to have unusual pull in a lot of arenas — both in romance and career — so don't waste one minute second-guessing or analyzing it. Just be grateful, dammit.

Libra (September 23—October 22)
You find something long lost this month. Something you once valued that you really need right about NOW. Here's what it could be: a first-class ticket on the Express Yourself Train. You gotta ticket to ride, ride, ride! A fast-tracked, special delivery of your own fool self to the state of happy, Baby! This is going to be your month to bedazzle, play and whip out the ole party plans come the full moon on the 12th. Good luck, good times and good friends are all in the stars for you. Not one single day looks dim.

Scorpio (October 23—November 21)
Remember how much you wanted to go cross-country in an RV? Well, move over, Winnebago! This is an excellent time to drive somewhere other than straight to Crazy Town. By the 18th, Venus enters your fifth house bringing romance, and you may find yourself with company in that Winnie. By the end of the month, a job offer might clip your wings, so skedaddle now while the going's good.

Sagittarius (November 22—December 21)
A temptation gets your attention that shouldn't after the 18th — it's an itch you shouldn't scratch. A slicker trickster might want you to sign the bottom line, but that don't mean you should. Walk and don't look back. Meanwhile, a better deal is waiting. On the 16th, something especially supercalifragilisticexpialidocious happens. Are you psychic? Are you seeing through walls? Good golly, just maybe!

Capricorn (December 22—January 19)
Celestial discharges might make it hard for you to concentrate right now. I don't mean body odor, Baby. I mean transitions to the Great Beyond. Relationships are everything during this month. Before Mercury enters Leo at the end of the month, someone may leave you a remembrance, or even an inheritance, which you richly deserve. Stay with your instincts, and don't get pushed around. Someone may make an offer that you thought would never come.

Aquarius (January 20—February 18)
You think with your pie hole open, the way a lot of people eat. But thinking is much nicer than chewing with your gums grinning at me. There's a lot to chew over anyhow. Here's why: Venus is in Cancer by the 18th; it makes you want to change something. New hairdo or hair don't, won't much matter, cause you choose change and change is choosing you. Screwing around with your hair is safer and easier to fix than running around with a married neighbor.

Pisces (Feb. 19—March 20)
It may have felt like someone in authority fired a warning shot straight into your brain last month. Dust off the resume, because somebody loves and wants you. Somewhere. Now you gotta march right out and find them, because the stars are kinder. July 16 and 20 are days when you will hit a target — not be one.

Aries (March 21—April 19)
The 25th is THE day to finally get your day. THE day — the kind that Dolly Parton sings about, when you strut yourself on down the street, shooting star power sparks right out of your heels. Heck, you are farting success right out of your backside. Remember, you're an Aries. Even if you mess up, you will have time to fix it before most people even figure it out. But whatever you do, don't ride through the car wash in your convertible until after August.

Taurus (April 20—May 20)
You get the big picture this month, starting with the full moon on the 12th. On the 15th, Jupiter enters Leo, which means a full year of fire-sign planets aligned in your sign. Fun, finances, frivolity and frolicking are yours. What you might want to do is consider a new move, job or love. And if you don't feel like it, put it off until the day after tomorrow and eat macaroni and cheese.

Gemini (May 21—June 20)
Your birthday gift is delivered a bit late, but it's a flat out lulu. By the middle of the month, Jupiter transits Leo. The twins start partying and don't stop until August 11. Travel! Romance! Jackpots! For everybody else, it may look like moonlight and madness, but for Gemini it is going to be one crazy good time. For once, you just might get a dividend check instead of a reality check. You are ever the complex ones, my little twins. They may call you out. They may call you for breakfast. They may call your bets. But nobody, anywhere, calls you dull.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Accidental Biscuit-Eater

Tastes like dirt, but lots of good crude protein

By Clyde Edgerton

Two days ago I walk into my home and see on the kitchen table a little white paper bag with something inside. I open the bag and look carefully — by golly, little cookies. I look around, pull one out and sneak a bite. It has a dirt-like taste and texture. I think to myself: This national anti-sweets, low-calorie movement is anti-taste.

"Listen, man, you ain't gone believe..."

In the bag I see a dollar bill-sized piece of white paper. I pull it out and read from the top: "May contain one or more of the following." I look down a list of seven items — things like "Gourmet Sweet Potato Palm," "Peanut Butter Carob Cookie," "Fresh Breath Mint Leaf." This thing should taste good, I think.

Each item is followed by a little paragraph resembling this one:

"Guaranteed Analysis: Protein (Min) 19.58%, Fat (Min) 13.87%, Fiber (Max) 1.2%, Moisture (Max) 5.07%. Ingredients: Whole Wheat Flour, Peanut Butter, Milk, Egg, Baking Power.

What the . . . ? The seventh item: Blueberry Dog Treats! (Some of you were way ahead of me [maybe because it's happened to you?].) I was eating a dog treat. I walked to the trash and spit it out.

But hold on a second. Go back up two paragraphs to that list with all the percentages. I'm not making those numbers up. I copied them exactly. Think about that 19.58 percent. Some of you are probably thinking, Wow, how did they measure protein so precisely? Others are perhaps thinking, Wow, some people are interested to the hundredth degree in what their dog eats. Others of you, if still reading, may be thinking dark thoughts.

Now, if you are standing, please sit down. I want to tell you something:

I soon found out that for this little white paper bag of dog treats, six ounces — one-third of a pound — my wife and children paid, at the farmers' market, FIVE DOLLARS.

I am embarrassed for my community.

I said loudly (after a few seconds of number crunching),"That's fifteen dollars a pound!"

And here's where my oldest son says, "It's only twelve dollars if you buy it by the pound."

I am embarrassed for my country. Lord have mercy.

I immediately rejoiced that my departed aunts and uncles and mama and daddy could not know of the situation in which I found myself.

And here I picture some dogs sitting around a campfire. A little spotted one with perky ears says, "Listen, man, you ain't gone believe what my people pay for my treats."

We're talking the price of oil.

A treat? Give the damn dog a saltine, people.

I recall feeding our bird dogs when I was growing up. I picture my mother gathering a plate of table scraps (including chicken bones, by the way) and saying to me, "Put that in the dog pan, would you?"

I'd go out on the back porch and dump the food in a big pan. We normally had two to four dogs at a stretch — and they lived outside, comfortably, in a pen.

At evening dog-feeding time (yes, once a day), if the table scraps were on the scarce end, I'd mix in a small amount of the cheapest dry dog food available and some water. I remember the dog food brand — Acme. We bought it by the large bag. Back then Acme dog food probably sold for less than ten cents a pound (fifty pounds for less than the six ounces noted above) — and it was probably more than 19.58 percent protein. Well, on second thought — the protein in Acme would have probably been in the 19.48–19.56 percent range. (I'll tell you one thing: Nobody alive in 1959 would measure to the hundredth percent how much protein was in dog food — not where I lived, anyway.) And then I'd walk out to the dog pen and feed our dogs our human family diet.

Yesterday, a friend told me that the price of dog food on the West Coast was double East Coast prices, and that out there they have dog food bakery shops with interior sparkling glass and brass and all that. Whoa. Wait. Another friend just told me we now have pet bakery shops in Wilmington. Muffins. Birthday cakes. The works.

Welcome to Oh Beautiful America. And crown thy good with pricey dog food. From sea to shining sea.

P.S. In France, I have *now* been told, you find restaurants where you sit across the table from your dog and each of you is served.

I am embarrassed for my species — and find new relevance in the term "gone to the dogs."

Clyde Edgerton is the author of ten novels, a memoir, and a new work, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY BLAIR

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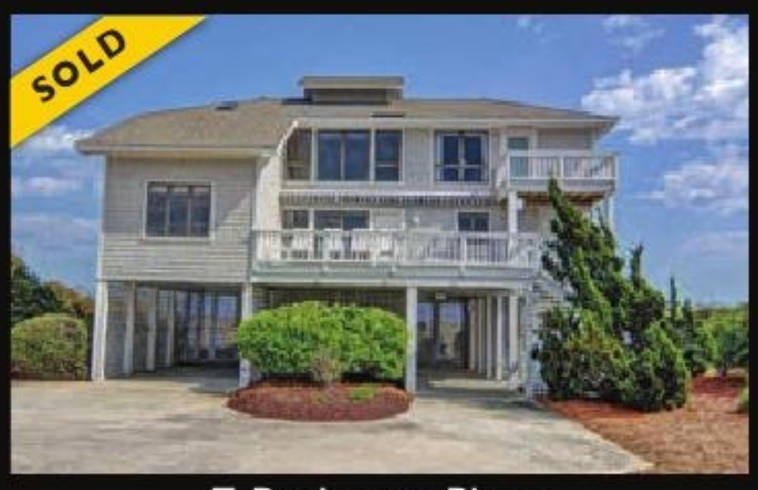

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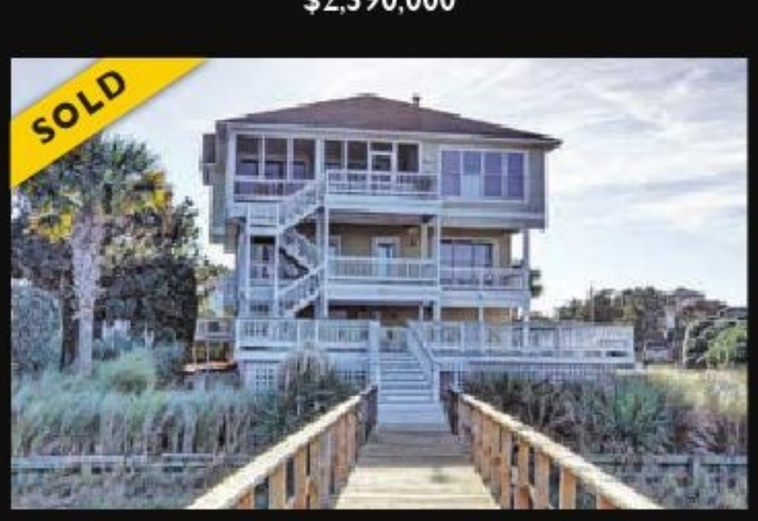

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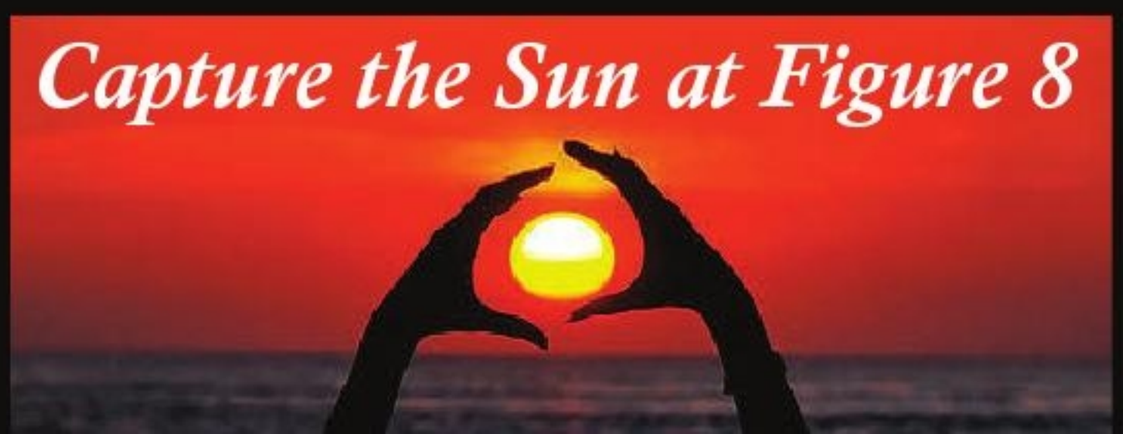

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